

**SMALL TOWN RURAL PRESERVATION:
CULTIVATING OUR PAST FOR THE PRESENT AND FUTURE**

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Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

“The country town is one of the great American institutions; perhaps the greatest, in the sense that it has had . . . a greater part than any other in shaping public sentiment and giving character to American culture”

Thorstein Veblen

The Country Town

Historic preservation has been a significant theme in the United States since the early 1960's. Every major city celebrates its rediscovered historic district and buildings as a source of civic pride and economic vitality.¹ It is difficult, if not impossible, to find a major urban center which does not include historic preservation as a significant component of its planning agenda. Yet, preservation efforts in small towns, and those specifically located throughout the midwest, are difficult to find. Small rural towns simply have not participated in historic preservation projects and activities to the extent demonstrated by large cities.

This dichotomy in preservation activity has received little attention by preservationists — both academicians and practioners. The major questions about small town rural preservation remain unanswered, and rarely debated. “While urban preservation gains national attention and increasing success, rural preservation remains almost unstudied, its problems hardly even identified, much less solved.”²

The purpose of this thesis is essentially two-fold: (1) to develop, identify, and clarify a working philosophy for historic preservation in rural small towns in

the midwest, and (2) to investigate preservation activities in two small midwest towns, and evaluate these efforts as they may apply to other small towns in the region.

For purposes of this discussion, an “operational definition” of a rural small town is: a community with a population of less than 10,000 people, geographically and politically distinct and separate from a metropolitan area, and which is “small enough so that the entire citizenry can (if they want to) actively participate in and shape the major decisions that affect local quality of life.”³

The first section of this paper will begin with a discussion about the concept of the “past” and its relationship to historic preservation in general. Thereafter, inquiry into the unique characteristics of small town culture, heritage, and the built environment will focus upon the challenge of developing a small town preservation philosophy. This section will then attempt to clarify a working preservation philosophy, and provide a summary of its application in small rural communities in the midwest. It is hoped that these inquiries and reflections could eventually contribute to a regional or national dialogue on small town, rural preservation.

The second part of this paper will provide information gleaned from repeated visits to the town of Council Grove, Kansas, and Weston, Missouri. Both of these small, midwest towns are unique examples of significant preservation activities; the residents of these communities have demonstrated extraordinary preservation success. Interviews with numerous members of the respective towns offer some insight into the “whys” and “hows” of their preservation activities. The observations and interviews offer valuable practical considerations for other small towns concerned about preservation.

As in any course of inquiry, additional questions are raised during the investigation. The final chapters of the thesis will conclude with recommended issues for future research and policy considerations. Many issues are related to the topic and some are essential for future progress in small town preservation.

This study is intended to be a mix of both “theory” and “application”. Good theory requires a sound understanding of the real world; and conversely, a productive inquiry into the real activities of preservation must be based upon a clear vision and understanding of the ultimate goal — to improve the quality of *all* life.

Chapter Two

HISTORIC PRESERVATION: WHY DO WE PRESERVE THE PAST THROUGH OUR BUILDINGS?

“For many of us in preservation, the ‘buzzwords’ are what we really rally around — not philosophy but jargon. Philosophy provides the underpinnings for systems in society that continue for hundreds of years. Buzzwords, unless put in tow of a working philosophy, only spur on trends and are easily misinterpreted.”

Chester H. Liebs

Preservation: Toward an Ethic in the 1980s

All too often, historic preservation focuses on limited, isolated issues and structures. The promoters of various projects are legitimately concerned about the building or site they are attempting to preserve, but few of them have really dug deep into the meaning of preservation. Buildings are often saved because they are old, “Victorian,” associated with history or stylish. But activities with undefined substance, and limited comprehensive understanding and support, are doomed for failure in the long run. Those who are active in preservation—both urban and rural preservationists—must develop a well-defined philosophy of preservation. It is essential that we examine “why” we preserve things. Through this analysis and examination, a clear and articulate philosophy is needed to give foundation to the efforts in small town preservation.

I. REFLECTIONS ON A WORKING PHILOSOPHY AND ETHIC

In the most basic description, historic preservation is the process of saving, studying, maintaining, restoring, and protecting things from our past. These things, in the context of preservation, have traditionally been buildings, monuments, or other built structures. But why are we concerned about the physical remains of the past in the first place? Our need to know the past, and more specifically, to protect and save what is tangible from the past, is the primary force behind the preservation movement⁴ I suggest, that fundamental to the discussion of a preservation philosophy is an understanding of our need to know the past. The past, as will be demonstrated, offers both benefits and burdens.

A. BENEFITS OF THE PAST

It is simply assumed that the past is an invaluable subject, and that everyone should know their history and family roots. As stated by David Lowenthal:

The legion of benefits of the past provides clearly transcends nostalgia... But why is the past necessary? And what qualities make it so? . . . Reasons advanced for admiring the past are often vague or perfunctionary; its desirability is simply taken for granted... Victorians prized the past less for any specific qualities than for its general ambience, and praise of the past today is so conventional that almost anything old may be thought desirable. So eclectic a past can embrace whatever is wanted, and even the newest artifacts feel "immemorial" within a few years of their appearance.⁵

Unfortunately, few efforts have been made to clearly articulate the benefits of knowing and relating to the past. No doubt, the real benefits in knowing the

past will vary from person to person and culture to culture. But I suggest that there are definite past-related benefits that can be identified and examined. The work of David Lowenthal, confirms this premise.⁶ Using much of Lowenthal's analysis, the following discussion sheds some clear and specific light on the subject of benefits derived from knowing and understanding the past.

1. IDENTITY

"How will we know it's us without our past?"

John Steinbeck

The Grapes of Wrath

Perhaps the most common drive to pursue the past is the need for identity. Without the knowledge of what preceded us, we are without an identity — there is no sense of our place within the scheme of time. Without our past we develop a feeling of personal and cultural isolation.

In the pursuit of prosperity and social success, Americans have managed to accelerate the tempo of change. We move from location to location with unprecedented speed and regularity. There is increasingly little time to identify with a place, even if we attempt to understand ourselves and the meaning of life. Yet, the individual must have an identity, and the past is an essential part of identity:

The past is integral to our sense of identity; the sureness of "I was" is a necessary component of the sureness of "I am". Ability to recall and identify with our own past gives existence meaning, purpose, and value. The ancient Greeks equated individual existence with what was memorable, and post Renaissance Europeans have increasingly seen the past as essential to personality.⁷

Personally, I have experienced this precise phenomenon. During a certain period of my life, there was an intense desire to confirm the past of my childhood. I had moved from my home at an early age, and had not been back for over 20 years. There seemed to be a need to confirm the “sureness” of the past to develop my identity in the present. It was only after the visit to my childhood home and neighborhood, that I was able to confirm that the past existed. The reality of place clarified the past as true, and not merely ephemeral dreams. From that previous experience of doubt, and question of my personal past, I was able to proceed on with present and personal issues facing me. The validation of past was essential in this process.

A critic of modern rural culture sums up this concept:

To think we can “escape” the past is absurd; we can no more escape the past than we can escape the needs and impulses of our inner being. And, indeed, there is a special bonding between the past and our inner needs, for our needs were returned in the womb of the past and therefore find little satisfaction in what is new. In my opinion, those who are most fascinated with the latest novelty are generally those who are most out of touch with their inner needs. Conversely, those who are most contemptuous of the past are often those who fight their inner needs as if those inner needs were demons. There is no escape from the past unless we literally blow ourselves up.⁸

2. CONTINUITY AND HERITAGE

Closely related to the concept of identity is the issue of continuity. To understand ourselves and our culture in present times, the link with the continuous past gives us our place in history and humanity. To lose the “connect-

edness" with the past creates disharmony and chaos. The thought of no past heritage and tradition creates disharmony. In turn, isolation increases with disharmony, which creates little purpose in the present, and offers no hope for personal future and cultural fulfilment.

As noted by Herbert Marcuse in *Eros and Civilization*:

The past remains present; it is the very life of the spirit; what has been decides what is. Freedom implies reconciliation — redemption of the past. If the past is just left behind and forgotten, there will be no end to destructive transgression.⁹

The well known psychiatrist, Carl G. Jung, has addressed this issue of continuity, and its relationship to the development of the individual and society:

Our souls as well as our bodies are composed of individual elements which were already present in the ranks of our ancestors . . . our ancestral components are only partly at home in new things. We are very far from having finished completely with the Middle Ages, classical antiquity, and primitivity as our modern psyches pretend. Nevertheless, we have plunged down a cataract of progress which sweeps us on the future with ever wider violence the farther it takes us from our roots. Once the past has been breached, it is usually annihilated, and there is no stopping the forward motion. But it is precisely the loss of connection with the past, our uprootedness, which had given rise to 'discontents' of civilization and to such a flurry and haste that we live more in the future and chimerical promises of a golden age than in the present, with which our whole evolutionary background has not yet caught up . . . The less we understand of what our ancestors sought, the less we understand ourselves,

and thus we help with all our might to rob the individual of his roots and guiding instincts so that he becomes a particle in the mass ruled only by what Nietzsche called the spirit of "gravity."¹⁰

On the subject of continuity, Lowenthal writes:

Continuity expresses the conjunction of the whole or parts of the past, diachrony the endurance of the past in the present, enriching both: 'the life of the flitting moment, existing in the antique shell of an age gone by' as Hawthorne felt in Rome, 'has a fascination which we do not find in either past or present, taken by themselves'. And if we could 'join... our past and present selves with all these objects, as Adria Stokes wrote, 'we would feel continually at home.'¹¹

Heritage is difficult to articulate, but it definitely involves an unbroken link — though ragged and unexplainable at times — with all that has happened before us in humanity. Relying upon Webster,¹² the definition of heritage includes "something that is handed from past generations", and "passed down by inheritance". The word comes from the Latin heriter— to inherit. What is important in this discussion, is that "heritage" requires both a giver and a receiver to complete the process of "passing" or "handing". There is a presumption and duty by those living in the present that their actions and thoughts will be passed to the following generations, and this process requires the continuity of passing on to *all* subsequent generations. Otherwise, we will unknowingly lose invaluable inheritance from the past if the chain is ever broken.

Ironically, those who drafted the National Heritage Act confess that they "could no more define the national heritage than we could define, say beauty or art . . . So we decided to let the national heritage define itself".¹³ Heritage cannot

be absolutely defined, because it is an ongoing process. Each age and culture shall develop a unique inheritance to be passed on; to restrict this process through a limiting definition would by implication destroy it.

3. GUIDANCE

“The guidance we need... can still be found in the traditional wisdom of man.”

E. F. Schumacher
Small is Beautiful

We are often encouraged to know the past for the lessons it teaches:

“Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.”¹⁴ Adherence to such popular philosophy does not quite guarantee the all encompassing prophetic results. Rarely, if ever, are identical facts, cultures, and events available to be repeated. It is true, the past can give us insight and guidance, but it cannot give us assurance against contemporary mistakes and errors.

The survivors of the Nazi concentration camps and others who remind us of the Holocaust often wear a small badge with the simple word, “Remember”. Those who had no contact with this episode of recent history often ask “what?” should they remember. Yet, those who have a close relationship to the Holocaust know immediately the meaning and purpose of this badge. They know the cruelty of man must never be forgotten.

Here, history reminds us that we should never forget the victims of this real horror. The past is our warning to be vigilant — to denounce and prevent any potential future horrors. The memory of the dead should be maintained to prevent a Nazi-type age from ever emerging again.

The guidance of the past can also help us pursue the positive which can be

affirmed through history. Columnist George Will recently affirmed the study of history as a means to guard democracy:

The reason for studying history is not to extract from it tidy potted little “lessons” about this or that particular problem. On the contrary, the basic lesson to be learned concerns the particularity of past answers to “recurring” situations. The study of history should encourage citizens to appreciate (quoting Prof. Paul Gagnau, University of Massachusetts), “the necessary combination — sometimes accidental — of circumstances, ideas and leadership that exists when democracy flourishes. Such a combination does not occur automatically or last indefinitely, so the truly tough part of civic education is to prepare people for bad times. Students should learn what has been required, and will be required again to preserve democracy: Hard work, high costs, and genuine sacrifice — toil, tears, and taxes.”¹⁵

4. MYTH AND INSPIRATION

There is something about our past which is undeniable: we all have an individual, personal past which is unique, and we also have a collective past which is common to our place and culture. And, in all of these pasts, there is both fact and myth. As David Lowenthal writes, we have always viewed the past in mythical and ideal terms, as a source of inspiration:

Investing some particular epoch with every virtue is another once-favored use of the past now out of vogue. According to earlier common belief, there was once a time when all things were perfect. But the perfection was mythic, not historical . . . The pastoral poems of Ovid and Virgil, conflating Sicily and

Arcadia, and the paintings of Claude and Poussin giving them scenic form, held up to view prototypical idealized pasts . . . The golden age for Renaissance humanists was classical antiquity, whose ideals they sought to realize in their own creations. In the eighteenth century artists aimed anew to distill the essence — truth, purity, simplicity, primitive verity — of antiquity . . . Historical relativism today makes any golden age an evident fiction. Even those most besotted with the past know too much to invest a particular period with perfection. Great bygone epochs still compel admiration, but their virtues are neither archetypal nor transmissible. Today we hanker less for a golden age — always a land of fantasy, even when derived from some fancied past — than for a past in general or for more recent if less inspiring Good Old Days.¹⁶

Lowenthal's assertions that the past does not provide epoch-type virtue is, I believe, not entirely correct. True, in historical terms, modern scholars strip away all sense of fantasy to distill the raw facts; however, the continuing influence of myth and symbols derived from our past should not be ignored.

For instance, every child in America is familiar with the story of George Washington cutting down the cherry tree. This story from our past creates invaluable myth and symbolism for the virtues of integrity and honesty. In a more recent time, how many of us have been inspired by the struggles of Martin Luther King and Mahatma Gandhi? These epoch-like stories have transcended historical fact and continue to inspire individuals to push for social justice for all. Both figures have been recognized by their powerful acts and thought; and myths have grown out of these "facts" to enlarge their significance.

The influence and power of myth has been the primary study of Joseph Campbell. Campbell reminds us that modern man continues to be profoundly influenced by the symbols and myths which are part of our past. All cultures produce symbols through their built environment. As Campbell reminds us, the power of the ancient myths are alive in contemporary symbols.¹⁷

In America today, perhaps the most obvious power from the past remains in our religions. Both dominant western religions, Judaism and Christianity, are based upon history, myth, and symbols which serve as the vehicle for divine truth and understanding. In every synagogue and church, the ceremony celebrates the past. We imitate past traditions as part of the religion — lighting candles, chanting, taking of the Eucharist, and prayer in memory and honor of those who continue to inspire us. It is suggested, therefore, that while the past may not serve as inspiration in the academic community, through religious ceremony and participation, most people continue to find value in the past. Clearly, religion, common folklore and historical stories about our nation's past leaders continue to influence and inspire us today on a grand scale.

5. ENRICHMENT

The past enriches the present world around us: "The present when backed by the past is a thousand times deeper than the present when it presses so close that you can feel nothing else."¹⁸

Communities that have maintained their buildings and tradition of the past seem more enriched and fulfilled. Traditions permeate every aspect of European life, and the past serves to give Europe more character than is often found in American towns and cities. The past, expressed in celebrations, preservation

and traditions give the present a value that cannot be created in isolation.

It is understood that many of these so-called "benefits" interact closely with one-another. The benefits of the past are closely intertwined and rarely inseparable. There is no doubt that other categories can be delineated, but these topics do clarify and reflect the essence of past benefits. Next, a short summary of the "burdens" of the past is in order.

B. BURDENS OF THE PAST

"No artist will paint his picture, no general win his victory, no nation gain its freedom without forgetting the past."

F. Nietzsche

Use and Abuse of History

Again, Lowenthal reminds us that the past is also detrimental. He states:

The past not only aids and delights; it also threatens and diminishes us. Most of its advantages involve drawbacks, most of its promises imply risks . . . Traditionally, the past has been as much feared as revered. Most of its teachings have been threatening and doom laden, dominated by ominous or tragic figures . . . Reverence for the past is commonly seen to inhibit change, embargo progress, dampen optimism, stifle creativity.¹⁹

This section will review the most significant burdens, and evaluate how they adversely affect us living in the present.

1. NOSTALGIA

Today there is a nostalgia craze. Our society is hopping on a bandwagon to go back to a place and time that seems simpler and better. Unfortunately, this

preoccupation with nostalgia appears to be an infantile avoidance of reality. The media and advertisers are capitalizing on this regressive personality, and the public is exploited.²⁰ It seems to be promoting the concept that the present is dangerous and sad, and that the past was wholesome, happy, and joyous.

Clearly, as has been discussed in earlier sections of this thesis, the past does provide us with lessons, inspiration, and ways to be enriched. But the past cannot be regained, and must never be invoked to avoid the realities of today's challenges and opportunities. It is much too easy and simple to embrace the past as all good and to assert that the present is all bad. If the majority of us accept such nostalgic preoccupation as good, the present and future are doomed to fail. The past provides us with no exact solutions to modern political, social, and environmental problems. To imitate and retreat into past life styles will not clean the oceans, or find a cure for AIDS. The past may give us guidance, and it can provide lessons for contemporary solutions, but copying or re-enacting the past is not a productive response to our present challenges.

Nostalgia was initially perceived as a physical disease. It was first diagnosed and described in 1688 as "a continuous vibration of animal spirits through those fibers of the middle brain in which the impressed traces the Fatherland still cling."²¹ The word was derived from the Greek *nosos* — return to native land, *algas* — suffering or grief. This disease was often seen in people who were away from their native land, who were languishing in depression, and some of whom actually died from the distress.

The disease of nostalgia was reported by a Russian general in describing problems with his troops in 1733. In the late 1700's, beleaguered French troops were given convalescent home leave for nostalgia. The U.S. Surgeon General

warned of the malady during World War II, and as recent as 1946 nostalgia was termed a potentially fatal “psycho-physiological” complaint by noted social scientists.²²

Now, nostalgia is rarely associated with homesickness, but more precisely considered a state of mind — a desire to embrace and relive the past. This is clearly a rejection of the *present*, and a contempt for the future. It implies little hope for the future; and, I suggest that it is analagous to the child who is unwilling to leave the comfort and security of the home.

The philosopher Fredrick Nietzsche repeatedly warned against an over indulgence in the past. He criticized the European academic community for its preoccupation with history and among his observations, he claimed that “over attention to the past turns men into dilettante spectators, their creative instinct destroyed, their individuality weakened; seeing themselves as latecomers born old and grey . . . only in moments of forgetfulness . . . does the man who is sick of the historical fever ever act.”²³

By living through nostalgia, we may in fact become like the “TV couch-potatoe.” Pathetically, however, we will not be watching television, we will be passively watching our life and world as passive spectators of the past.

2. TRADITION, CHANGE, AND INNOVATION

Closely akin to the problems of nostalgia, are the issues of tradition and its impact upon innovation. The past has given us our traditions. The most basic institutions and behaviors of our society have been developed from previous generations. Some of these traditions serve us well, and may be timeless — i.e. The Golden Rule, The Ten Commandments, etc. However, other traditions may

be outdated and destructive in contemporary society. Civilization needs to grow and fulfill itself in framing a more just and healthy world, and traditions such as segregation, sexism, and environmental destruction in the name of capitalism need to cease. Contemporary society should not have a blind allegiance to tradition if it adversely affects humanity or the environment.

Herein lies a great irony, for in order to progress and innovate for present and future crises, we need to examine the past. But we must be selective and wise in our reliance upon the past for guidance and tradition. An all encompassing, blind allegiance to the traditions which have brought us to the present does not guarantee solutions or improvement.²⁴

3. THE CUMULATIVE BY-PRODUCTS OF PROGRESS

We have inherited everything from the past, including its trash, pollution, and dangerous toxic wastes. The cumulative effect has resulted in a planet that is on the verge of destruction.²⁵

In all fairness to past civilizations, our environmental crisis is primarily linked to only the recent past. Most hazardous waste did not even exist prior to the industrial revolution. The problems began to accelerate at the turn of the century, and with the widespread use of the automobile and other technological inventions, the past has made the present a dangerous time.

Like other problems from the past we have an opportunity to develop innovative responses, or to continue down this adverse path of environmental destruction. The past offers a guide for a civilization which can be sustained in greater harmony with the natural environment, and the general good. In *Human Scale*, Kirkpatrick Sale notes the irony of the past as both culprit and solution:

The onslaught (of industrial pollution) on the Parthenon is not of course the worst offense of the contemporary world. But it is a symbol, for me a haunting one: as the Parthenon so fittingly embodies the heritage of Western Civilization, so it displays as well the condition to which that civilization has been brought over the last few decades and the crises with which, I think, one can say without hyperbole, it is now imperilled . . .

The perils and the promise, then coexist in the singular shrine that is the Parthenon, as fitting an exemplification of our own age as of Pericles's. Its present plight makes manifest our crises its past glories suggest the direction of our remedies.²⁶

II. HISTORIC PRESERVATION AND

ITS UNIQUE RELATIONSHIP TO THE PAST

"... Architecture is to be regarded by us with the most serious thought. We may live without her; and worship without her, but we cannot remember without her."

John Ruskin

The Seven Lamps of Architecture

To this point, the discussion has been concerned with the factors associated with the past in general. No distinction has been made between the many ways to know or understand the past. There are numerous sources of past knowledge — written and oral history, folkways, memory, relics, artifacts, traditions, music, art and the built environment, to name a few. Historic preservation is but one way for us to know the past, but what is unique about the preservation of the physical environment that distinguishes it from the other ways? Does

preservation provide us with special benefits through knowing the past?; and, if so, shouldn't these unique qualities help frame a preservation philosophy and ethic? This section will address these questions.

A. KNOWLEDGE OF THE PAST THROUGH BUILDINGS

Preservation of the built environment is unique in its capacity to physically maintain part of the tangible past for the present and future. We, of course, preserve many relics of history in museums. Our homes are often private collections from our personal or family past — portraits on the wall, grandmother's china, and other family memorabilia and heirlooms. But historic preservation is the *only* process to keep the physical past functional and part of every day life. Through historic preservation we are able to enter buildings, touch walls, and use the structure in a purposeful manner. The past is part of the building, but it is united practically and tangibly with the present.

There is another, less functional, approach to preservation which is akin to the museum, and, in fact, the product is called a "Museum House". The preservation of such structures is not for a contemporary "use" per se, but more so for preserving it for view and observation by an admiring public. Famous personalities — political leaders, artists, inventors, and criminals — all have homes preserved and protected in their name and memory. Unlike the structure which has been preserved and adapted for modern use, these buildings are not experienced in the same way. The attempt to "freeze time" is conspicuous and intentional. I suggest, however, that preservation of these special structures does enable us to understand the past in a manner which cannot be experienced otherwise. For instance, there is a profound impact upon viewing the home of Paul Revere and

walking up the steeple of the Old North Church in Boston where the lantern was displayed to warn of the approaching British militia. The past seems more real; it is tangible in these forms, and appreciated on many levels. These experiences cannot be equated through books, photographs, or stories. I suggest that the simple "physicalness" of preserved buildings is a unique way to know, through sensory knowledge and experience, our heritage and past.

For the average person, history and culture is not a part of their daily pursuit. Historical inquiry is most often an intellectual pursuit that may be part of daily life for academics and other related professionals. The preserved physical environment, however, is one of the few means for the common person to regularly contact the past. Without the buildings from our past, modern society would be devoid of many, if not all, daily reminders that there is a heritage that has brought us to the present. We all need to be reminded that modern skyscrapers and urban malls have not always been here.

John Ruskin is worth noting on this subject. In *The Seven Lamps of Architecture*, in his chapter "The Lamp of Memory", he states:

Therefore, when we build, let us think that we build forever. Let it not be for present delight, nor for present use alone; let it be such work as our descendants will thank us for . . . for, indeed, the greatest glory of a building is not in its stone, nor in its gold. Its glory is in its Age, and in that deep sense of voicefulness, of stern watching, of mysterious sympathy, nay, even of approval or condemnation, which we feel in walls that have been washed by the passing waves of humanity.²⁷

B. PATINA AND THE MYSTIQUE OF AGE

To truly understand and know the mystique of age on a building and its fabric, there is no substitute for touching, observing, and “experiencing” an old building, itself. This process cannot be adequately known through books or pictures. The building owns its age, and it is revealed to us if we are willing to look. There is glory in the age of physical structures; like people, buildings can reflect a mystical status as a result of their age and history. David Lowenthal writes:

Many share Ruskin’s view that the organic nature of buildings ennobles their wear and tear. John Soane sketched his buildings as they would look not only when new but after centuries of use. ‘Men should make buildings, as God made men, to be beautiful in age as well as in youth,’ a building’s architect should bear in mind that some people will see it as an aged warrior or matron, not just a brave baby.²⁸

Having focused upon the general implications and significance of the past and its relationship to historic preservation, this paper will now inquire into the specific questions of a working philosophy for preservation in small towns.

Chapter Three

AN EMERGING PHILOSOPHY FOR SMALL TOWN PRESERVATION

“Preserve country towns where they exist.”

Christopher Alexander, et al.

A Pattern Language

So far, this paper has considered the reasons we need to know the past, and how these issues are related to the general concept of historic preservation. It is imperative, however, to emphasize that the past is only one element of a preservation philosophy. [Preservation is an activity and subject which includes issues far more diverse than simply the preservation of history through the built environment. It includes conservation of resources, celebration of culture, preservation of community, and planning for a sustainable future.] A broad, general discussion of these issues is worthwhile for the preservation community. However, unlike the philosophical inquiries into the benefits and burdens of the past, these “other components” require a more restricted analysis on a subject-by-subject approach. Specifically, a comprehensive working philosophy for preservation in small, rural towns encompasses issues far different from the problems facing preservation in large metropolitan centers. The following section addresses the unique factors to be considered in small town preservation, and the issues which require special attention and efforts. This section, it is hoped, will provide some insight into a comprehensive, working philosophy for small town historic preservation.

I. THE SMALL TOWN

"Nothin' but the dead and dying in my lttle town."

Paul Simon

My Little Town

At this time in American history, the small, rural town is an endangered species. The demographic statistics reveal the dramatic changes in American society:²⁹ (Figure 1, graph)

* The first United States Census, taken in 1790, showed that 95 percent of the population was rural.

* In 1893, 42 percent of the population lived on farms.

* In 1908, 33 percent of the population lived on farms, and 54 percent lived in rural areas.

* As late as 1940, 23 percent of U.S. population was living on farms, and 43 percent lived in rural areas.

* The 1970 census revealed only 5 percent of the population living on farms, and 26 percent live in rural communities.

* In 1983, the U.S. Bureau of census showed only 2.4 percent of the population living on farms.³⁰

There is a direct relationship between the decline of the farm population and the decline of population and services in rural communities.³¹ The acceleration of population loss from rural areas continues at excessive speed. Nineteen percent of the nation's non-metropolitan areas lost population in the 1970's; from 1980 to 1983 that figure increased to 30 percent, and from 1983 to 1985 nearly 50 percent of the non-metropolitan counties lost population. In the last 40 years, a total of 30 million people have left their farms, and rural small towns.³²

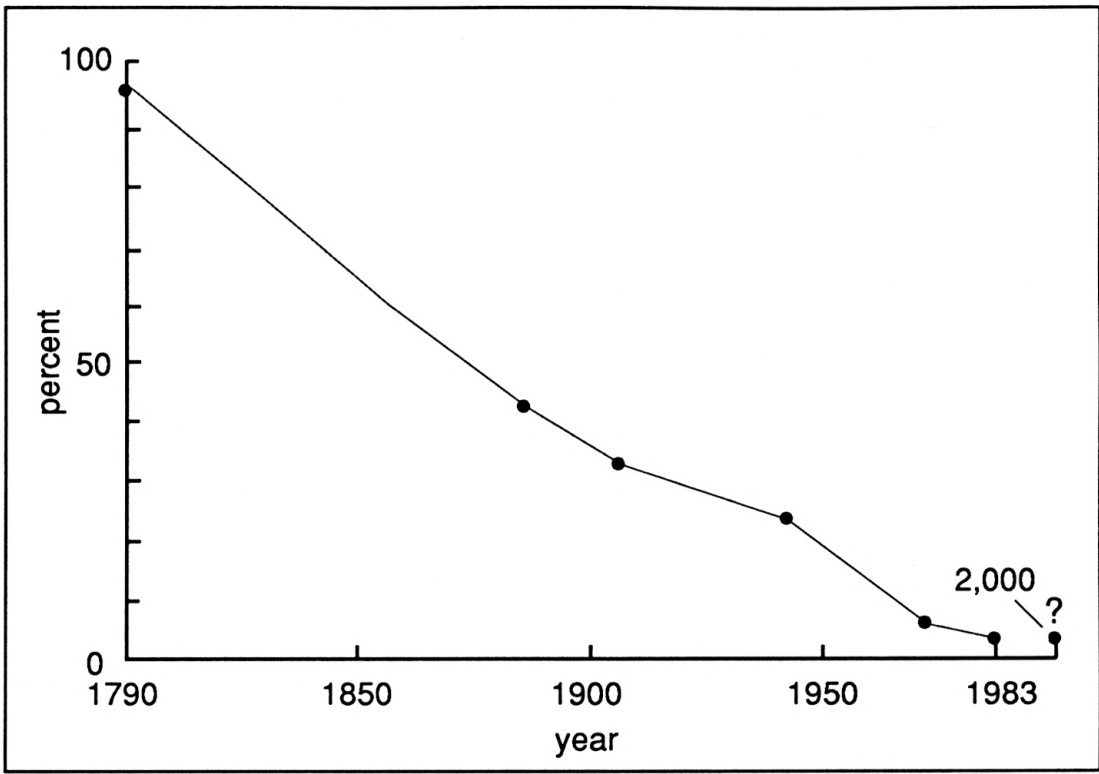


Figure 1
U. S. Census: percentage of population living on farms

A drive through any small town, rural community in the midwest confirms what these facts suggest: small town America is at a crisis. Many of our small towns are dying, and more will cease to be active, livable communities.³³

With the potential loss of many small towns and much rural culture, are there compelling reasons to save and preserve small rural communities?

A. WHAT IS A SMALL RURAL TOWN?

This thesis is concerned with the preservation and future of small rural communities. This, of course, can include an immense geographical area, but the primary focus is upon the communities of the plain states which have a common tradition in agriculture: Kansas, Nebraska, Oklahoma, Iowa, Missouri, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Minnesota. By no means should the exclusion of any particular state be considered profound. As demonstrated in a recent governor's conference representing most of these states, this geographic region has developed a common concern for rural issues and other planning problems.³⁴

Defining a "small rural town" does create some problems. For instance, the U.S. Census Bureau classifies any one living in the open country or a town of less than 2,500 as "rural." Yet, the same institution defines any area as "metropolitan" if it is located within a county with a total population of 50,000 or more.³⁵ As a result, Weston, Missouri, with a population of 1,500 is "metropolitan" because it is in Platte County with more than 50,000. Yet, Salina, Kansas, a small city of 40,000 is officially non-metropolitan, and Bethany, Missouri with a population of 3,100 is considered in the same category as Salina. Clearly, these definitions "lead to absurdities."³⁶

A rural small town should not be confused with a small city. Yet, in the

evaluation of an appropriate definition, one author has observed:

Perhaps we are beginning to define the city itself as a place where there is an unusual concentration of services. A contemporary definition of the town is hard to come by, and we almost always refer not to the town, but to the *small* town as a social and cultural entity, a definite type of community with special and cultural and economic characteristics.³⁷

Through personal studies and observations, I am certain that the census department's limited inquiries are not adequate for accurately defining a small, rural town. Clearly, Lawrence, Kansas, with a population of not even 50,000 is a small city. It appears, in fact, that many Kansas towns of at least 10,000 to 15,000 are doing well when it comes to relative economic stability.³⁸ Communities with less than 10,000 are more often struggling to stay viable. Research shows that rural towns of this size are having serious problems retaining youth and providing economic opportunities for their citizens.³⁹ At this size and smaller, to about 2,000 people, a community remains a relatively self-sufficient entity capable of having unique social, political, economic, and cultural characteristics.⁴⁰

In *Human Scale*, Kirkpatrick Sale, discusses the concept of community and the "magic size" of small towns. He notes that in present society "a range of 5,000 to 10,000 shows up with surprising frequency in the recommendations of architects and city planners for the preferred size of a community."⁴¹ Christopher Alexander identifies a "country town" as a place with its own economic and social structure entirely surrounded by open countryside with a population between 500 and 10,000.⁴²

As will be discussed later in this paper, the size of the community for planning purposes has widespread consequences. For purposes of this thesis, a

rural, small town has about no more than 10,000 residents; it is distinct and separate from a metropolitan area—socially, politically, and geographically; it has an economic base, which offers substantial employment and income to its own citizens; and has a relationship or dependency to the nearby countryside and natural resources. An insightful commentary still deserves recognition; it hits the issue directly and succinctly:

Yet size has little to do with the definition (of small town), and indeed *small* town and country town are often interchangeable concepts. I myself would tentatively define such a town as one which has close ties with the surrounding countryside.⁴³

B. IDENTITY, HERITAGE, AND SMALL TOWNS

The small town may not be a part of our individual childhood, but it is most likely where our parents or grandparents came from. The United States was predominately composed of family farms and small communities in the 18th Century. Even into the early 1900's a substantial part of the population was living in small town and rural settings.⁴⁴

If we look at European culture, where most of us find our cultural roots, European population was scattered throughout the countryside in small towns, villages, and hamlets.⁴⁵ And going even further back in time, early human history is derived primarily from small communities. Rene Dubos states, "The biology and psychology of Modern Man has certainly been influenced by the fact that, during the past 10,000 years, most people have lived in villages of some 500 inhabitants."⁴⁶

So, if we are to acknowledge that the past is essential for identity and

continuity in the present, the small town is an undeniable component of most, if not all, people. To understand ourselves, and to appreciate our culture we need to understand our link to the small town. In most situations, our parents or our grandparents provide a direct chain to the small town. In the midwest, most of our preceding generations had some form of association with the small town. Most of us are reminded of the old stories of the small rural communities where our parents grew up. It is a place in our past which continues to define ourselves and our culture. It is also a place, which influences our self-image, identity, and dreams through myth and images.

C. THE SMALL TOWN MYTH AND IDEAL

The image of a small town, and the many elements of a small town culture, emphasize a perceived difference from the urban community. In *Small Town in Mass Society*, considered to be an essential study for all rural sociology, the authors discuss what the townspeople of "Springdale" think of themselves:

First and foremost, the term (just plain folks) serves to distinguish Springdalers from urban dwellers, who are called "city people", an expression which by the tone in which it is used implies the less fortunate, those who are denied the wholesome virtues of rural life. City people are separated from nature and soil, from field and stream, and are caught up in the inexorable web of impersonality and loneliness... The term also includes a whole set of moral values: honesty, fair play, trustworthiness, good-neighborliness, helpfulness, sobriety, and clean-living.⁴⁷

These images, or myths, of small town living dominate our attitudes to-

wards rural society. As is obvious from this capsule-image, these ideas about small town citizens are both far-fetched, and partly true. What these images do, in my opinion, is to confirm the idea of a small town myth that survives today.

In "*Small Town America*" Richard Lingeman recognizes that the small town myth is in all of our hearts:

The towns of myth — the towns of grassroots democracy, where all were equal, and the judge lent Shakespeare and Milton. The dreamy, dozing, pastoral towns imagined by Sherwood Anderson, poised on the pink of the industrial revolution. The town as the Home from which we escaped yet whose map is etched forever in our memories. The town as base, a launch-pad for the young to propel themselves from, out into the world — these young people in the cities always fated to be asked where they were from, then, what's it near: young people from Nowhere near Somewhere. The town as repose and sanctuary and the town as the home to which you can't go again. The town: good generous, kind, helpful in trouble, cradle to grave; materialistic, insular, suspicious, set in its own ways, canny, backbiting, smothering . . .
The town in our hearts.⁴⁸

We all know that this perfect little community does not, in fact, exist. Our common sense knows it; the sociologists have proven these concepts to be false.⁴⁹ Yet, the majority of Americans would choose to live in a rural setting if they could control their fate.⁵⁰

I suggest that the myth of the small town confirms our hopes and aspirations of all idyllic society and landscape. It is Utopian in part, and is also a rejection of the hustle-bustle, high anxiety life-style of urban America. Joseph

Campbell tells us that myths are a reflection of the truth which are expressed through stories deeply profound in our spirit, and inseparable from the human psyche.⁵¹ Like so many myths, they appear to be both idealized and common, factual and unbelievable, and always meaningful to the human condition. Our small town myth continues to be a very powerful force in American society. It is no surprise that "Andy of Mayberry" is still on TV fostering dreams of small town living; and that a "Prairie Home Companion", and its creator Garrison Keillor receive overwhelming popularity from all walks of society in the United States.

The myth of small town — where there remains forever, community, love, co-operation, simplicity, strength and wholesomeness — is an ideal which shall continue to provide inspiration. The midwest heritage, in particular, has grown up praising these concepts; these are the images which make all of us whole and human. Garrison Keillor's Lake Wobegon is *that* perfect little town "where all the men are good looking, all the women are strong, and all the children are above average."⁵² It is the small town where we all are from, and where we all long for. The myth continues to nurture us.

D. SMALL TOWN AS COMMUNITY

As noted by Harold Williams, former director of the Institute on Man and Science, "The fact that the sustaining symbols for the small town were as much myth as reality does not subtract from their value."⁵³ Referencing a presentation given by Lewis Mumford at the Institute, Williams' concept of small town community is explained:

People who live in villages don't love each other particularly. They are not different in the ordinary affairs

of life and they don't differ enormously from the fellows in the cities. They take less stock, perhaps, in what passes for information in the city but in a sense they are the same people. But in moments of crisis, in birth, in illness or disaster or death, they really display the depth of the human body. They're on hand to help their neighbors. They come to aid without being asked . . . This is the essential human quality — that beneath all the acquisitions of higher culture, there are certain fundamental things that human beings ought to know about each other. They respect the crises of life and are up to these occasions. That is profound. That is what is important in small town.⁵⁴

Small town rural culture is tied closely to the traditions of independence, democracy, self-reliance and the ever present relationship of man to his agricultural root.

In *Little Towns Like These*, the author writes, "In little towns the unlocked door affirms that society is a compact between individuals, an unspoken agreement to help, protect, and trust one another."⁵⁵ This symbol of unlocked doors exemplifies the relationship between the individual (and family) and the community at large. In our society, the balance of these two separate but dependant concepts are often strained. By contrast, the city demands that doors remain locked — even bolted, barricaded and wired. There is all too often a break down of community support and participation. However, these values do, in fact, remain in small towns, as is noted:

Of all things praiseworthy about small towns, their traditions of democracy and self-reliance shine brightest, both are basics to small town society and people...

In a world grown increasingly complex and remote, there remain very few places where our best traditions come to life every day. The little town, where quiet streets pass homes with unlocked doors, exemplify the best of what we are.⁵⁶

The discussion of rural culture cannot be complete without reference to the thoughts and work of Wendell Berry. To paraphrase his work denies its poetry; and all of his work is relevant to the issues of small town, rural preservation. His comments on rural culture are most pertinent:

A culture is not a collection of relics or ornaments, but a practical necessity, and its corruption invokes calamity. A healthy culture is a communal order of memory, insight, value, work, conviviality, reverence, aspiration. It reveals the human necessities and the human limits. It clarifies our inescapable bonds to the earth and to each other. It assures that the necessary restraints are observed, that the necessary work is done, and that it is done well... The growth of such a culture was once a strong possibility in the farm communities of this country. We now have only sad remnants of those communities. If we allow another generation to pass without doing what is necessary to enhance and embolden the possibility now persisting with them, we will lose it altogether. And then we will not only invoke calamity — we will deserve it.⁵⁷

E. SCALE

The importance of "smallness" in small towns should not be underestimated. The scale of buildings, number of people, number of institutions and

places are all smaller in the rural community. Contrasted to the city, the most striking difference between the two environments is size.

The smallness of a community permits individuals to know each other. They are able to pass neighbors on the street, and really acknowledge the individual as someone they know. Smallness tends to gain much of its strength from its "localness".⁵⁸ As Harold Williams points out, "smallness is not so much a literal term describing anything as it is a metaphor to reflect some basic beliefs and values deemed important and related but whose connectedness is hard to articulate at literal level."⁵⁹

Clearly, smallness is not a desirable scale in *all* human endeavors, but as E. F. Schumacher writes, the duality of large and small must be recognized and evaluated:

Today we suffer from an almost universal idolatry of giantism. It is therefore necessary to insist on the virtues of smallness — where this applies . . . what is needed in all these matters is to discriminate, to get things sorted out. For every activity there is a certain appropriate scale, and the more active and intimate the activity, the smaller the number of people that can take part, the greater the number of such relationship arrangements that need to be established . . .

What scale is appropriate? It depends on what we are trying to do. The question of scale is extremely crucial today, in political, social and economic affairs just as in almost everything else.⁶⁰

F. ARCHITECTURE AND PLACE

There is a certain architecture that cannot be found in the city; it is indig-enous to the small rural community. Most notably in the midwest farming com-munities, the agricultural structures remain as functioning buildings. The grain elevators often are the central location of commerce. The country court house is a special place which identifies the center of town. Its counterpart in the large city — city hall — is a monolith which stands side by side with corporate headquar-ters. The architectural distinction between business and government institutions is made more clearly in the small town.

The houses in small towns are not necessarily different from the architec-ture in the city. However, the physical fabric of neighborhood, or community, often is still in place. With the impact of developemnt and commercialization, every urban center has undergone massive destruction and change to many of their original neighborhoods. Because growth in small towns has not matched the pace of the city, many older, vernacular residences remain unaltered and in excellent condition.

Like any location, a small town may have a “special” example of architec-ture. Likewise, historical events of local or national significance, may be associ-ated with certain structures. The slow growth of small towns has thus resulted in the unintentional preservation of these resources which, if located in the urban setting, would probably have been razed or altered for new development. The small town can provide an original inventory of structures for these traditional concepts of historic preservation efforts.

The small town is also unique in its relationship to “place”.⁶¹ In *Small*

Town Designbook, the authors note that there are three physical characteristics of the small town 'place' which are unique: density, distance, and public space.⁶²

With regard to space, it is obvious that the densities — both buildings and people — are substantially lower in the small town than the urban areas. The authors of the Design Book understand that the effect of density is significant upon the atmosphere and personality of the small town. They note that small towns are often concerned with growth and economic development. Their research indicates that small town "scale and density will grow more toward the urban model. These physical changes can have a negative impact on the small town social ambiance. It can seriously damage the feeling of neighborliness and security in the small town."⁶³

Distance is closely related to the concepts of scale and density. As people are crowded together, there is decreasing "distance" between themselves and their private "environment." The contrast between urban and rural towns is again noteworthy:

In comparing urban areas and small towns in an investigation of distance, it is easy to see why the small town physical environment produces the positive social characteristics of security, confidence, and trust... In an urban area there is little physical distance. A person must manufacture an artificial social distance because the environment does not afford a natural distance... In the small town the concept of distance works in the opposite way. The environment provides a physical distance naturally, so the small town resident seeks social interaction to counteract this physical distance. It is this social interaction that breeds the special social ambiance and security and trust that the small town enjoys.⁶⁴

The third factor, space, defines the small town in a dimensional way — small town public space is essentially horizontal. The small town is usually organized in either a square or linear town form.⁶⁵ Under either of these concepts, the town is enclosed by a horizontal array of trees and landscape, “Somehow this horizontal, dynamic, soft, layered space contained by trees contributes to the feeling of security, confidence, and trust found in small towns. The exact amount of the contribution of these qualities is not easy to quantify but its role is extremely important.”⁶⁶

In *Keeping Time*, William Muntaugh follows a similar discussion of space and the small town. He writes, “In small towns, open space tends to be no less organized, but is a much larger part of the area’s composition because the defining elements of the environment (buildings) are much less densely compacted. In the rural environment, open space becomes the predominant component.”⁶⁷ However, I believe that both of these referenced works tend to miss a major understanding of space and small towns. The small town is by definition surrounded by countryside. The relationship of the people to the surrounding countryside is profound, for the countryside is a constant reminder to the residents of a small rural community that they are inexplicably connected to the natural environment. The land provides their food and is the basis for most small town economies. Yet, the countryside can have a dark side to it. The “out there” is mysterious, especially at night when the coyotes are howling, or when one is lost late at night on a country road. A winter storm can transform the gentle countryside into the wilderness in less than 24 hours with dangerous consequences to anyone who tries to venture into it.

Thus, the relationship between the town and the space beyond its borders

encourages a certain co-operation and unity among the people, especially during times of adverse weather or natural catastrophes. The small town is like a fortress in those times, the citizens unite to challenge the threat of nature and the sense of isolation. Small town people are forced to cooperate and band together during these times of collective adversity and crisis.

II. APPLICATION OF A WORKING PHILOSOPHY

“To restore a proper balance between city and rural life is perhaps the greatest task in front of modern man.”

E. F. Schumacher

Small is Beautiful

So far, this paper has attempted to explore and develop a philosophy for rural small town preservation. This inquiry has dealt with the impact of the past upon the present and future and the unique characteristics of small town culture, life style and the built environment. It is intended that this dialogue has helped formulate a comprehensive, yet specific, response to the “why” of small town preservation.

Assuming that this discourse has provided some insight into this fundamental question, the following section is a summation of the application of this philosophy. The application of a working small town preservation philosophy requires particular attention to rural culture, environmental factors, and the economic impact upon the community and its individual members.

A. RURAL CULTURE

Historic preservation has dramatically changed since its earliest days. Initially, perservation of single structures was the only activity considered appro-

priate. Later, it became acceptable to consider that historic preservation could look into the broader issues of preserving communities and districts.⁶⁸ Now, preservation has expanded to include not only a community, but also its surrounding greenbelt or natural environment.⁶⁹ However, the efforts and focus of historic preservation remain primarily on the physical environment. Rarely does mainstream preservation go beyond preserving physical things and places.

As early as 1967, it was acknowledged at the Williamsburg Preservation Conference that "preservation is now recognized as only a part of a wider concern for the conservation of all natural and cultural resources, and for the enhancement of the total environment."⁷⁰ This statement, made nearly 33 years ago, has yet to be fully embraced by the conventional corps of preservationists. I suggest that this expansive, more meaningful philosophy and application is the quintessence of small town rural preservation.

The preceding discussion of a small town preservation philosophy demonstrates that rural culture and heritage is unique. The rural lifestyle offers a distinct alternative to urban culture and society. The small rural town is a way of life, a unique blend and celebration of community, self-reliance, independence, democracy, and hard work. However, if the decline of viable small towns continues at the present rate, there will be fewer communities for people to live and work in. If some planners, in fact, are able to influence government policy, the elimination of many small towns will become intentional.⁷¹ Fewer small towns, in turn, will mean fewer opportunities to choose a non-metropolitan lifestyle. Ironically, the American population overwhelmingly would choose to live in a small town or rural environment,⁷² and our governments are doing very little, if anything, to promote this choice of life.

Thus, a dialogue of small town preservation goes beyond the conventional; it is an attempt, in essence, to preserve and celebrate an alternative lifestyle, a culture and a heritage. Small town preservation is not merely the preservation of a building, or just the recognition of an entire district, but it should affirm and embrace the concept that "historic preservation has more to do with the present and the future than with the past. Our job is not to decide from what past we want to keep, but what from the present . . . Historic preservation is truly a quality-of-life issue. When all else is said and done, it grows out of a universal need to establish networks for family and community that have some chance of taking root and thriving . . . taking responsibility for the cultural heritage."⁷³

Rural preservation has suffered from the arrogance of the urban mentality, and the elitism that has generally been associated with historic preservation.⁷⁴ In the rural setting, the elitism of preservation combined with the overwhelming bias toward urban standards have the potential to pervert, manipulate, and destroy the opportunity for good rural preservation. Rural culture and lifestyle must be understood prior to any attempt to preserve its buildings and landmarks. Ann Silverman, writer for *Historic Preservation* suggests: "The most successful rural preservation efforts look beneath the landscape to the broader issues challenging rural areas — encroaching development, the decline of the farm economy, poverty, substandard housing, and rapid social change."⁷⁵ Our experience in urban preservation provides us with the knowledge of similar problems. There, successful and widespread preservation was accomplished on a regular basis only when preservationists recognized urban socioeconomic problems, and participated in the process to improve the decay of the urban center.

Good and effective rural preservation must extend beyond conventional

standards which were established by the urban setting. If we hope to preserve and conserve rural, small town structures, there must be a population base to finance the efforts and to continue the care and use of the effort. Thus, rural preservation cannot focus exclusively on buildings; it must include the preservation of an entire culture — the life in small towns and farms. Rural economy and society needs to be saved and revitalized.

In this context, rural preservation and conservation are virtually synonymous. The National Trust's Rural Project states, "Rural conservation is the protection of the countryside and includes the preservation of buildings and villages of cultural significance, the protection of the surrounding open spaces and the enhancement of the local economy and social institutions . . . The interdisciplinary nature of rural conservation requires careful attention to local agriculture, economic, environmental, historical, political, and social factors as well."⁷⁶ This working definition is, ironically, a comprehensive survey of the problem spots facing rural America, and an indication of the broad expertise needed in this area. And herein lies the issue facing contemporary rural preservation: the preservation /conservation /social agenda has gone beyond the scope of sanctioned historic preservation. This signifies an understanding, a sensitivity to the rural life and its unique place in American society. Acknowledging the natural interdependence of preservation and conservation is a major step toward rural planning in general. But if rural preservation is to be successful, it must be cautious. In its noble concern for planning and the preservation of the *entire* rural landscape and population, rural preservation may be taking on a responsibility far beyond its present resources and skills. Understanding the problems of the country is important for good rural preservation and conservation, but to be

social workers, developers, economists, health planners and more, as some preservationists have proposed, is another thing.

The rural tradition is difficult to identify within the context of preservation and conservation. It is, as this paper has suggested, more than the buildings in small towns and the scenic countryside; it is not only a country school or a long, gentle, dirt road. These are parts of the country lifestyle and tradition, but not its sum total. Wendell Berry helps explain the what the rural tradition is all about:

The best farming requires a farmer — a husbandman, a nurturer — not a technician or businessman. A technician or a businessman— can be made in a little while, by training. A good farmer, on the other hand, is a cultural product; he is made by a sort of training, certainly, in what his time imposes of demands, but he is also made by generations of experience. This essential experience can only be accumulated, tested, preserved, handed down in settled households, friendships, and communities that are deliberately and carefully native to their own ground, in which the past has prepared the present and the present safeguards the future.⁷⁷

Small town and rural life has been centered around agriculture. Thus, if we are going to preserve and conserve, we must preserve the farm. The [loss of over 4.5 million family farms in the last 40] years is a direct and major cause for the loss of rural buildings and culture.⁷⁸ There will be no landmarks to preserve without a rural culture to celebrate and use them and pass them on to succeeding generations.

Preservationists should work not only for conserving the rural landscape, but more precisely, preserving and promoting a *working* rural landscape.⁷⁹ We

must have a renaissance of the small family farm, producing goods for regional markets, based upon an intelligent and responsible use of the land. In rural preservation and conservation, "a fundamental principle must be the protection of the source: the seed, the food species, the soil, the breeding stock, the old and wise, the keepers of memories, the records."⁸⁰

B. CONSERVATION/ECOLOGY

It is apparent that historic preservation is only a component of the major issue facing humanity — the conservation of natural resources and saving the environment. "The distinction which Americans have traditionally made between conservation of the natural environment may, (and the built environment) of necessity, erode in the future. This is most naturally to occur in rural areas ..."⁸¹

Our civilization is now facing the consequences of unrestricted depletion of natural resources, and the dangers of our own industrial toxic wastes. The sustainability of humanity on this planet is seriously being questioned.⁸² The forecasts, which are becoming increasingly bleak, tell us that our pollution and rate of consumption must change immediately. If not, we will experience, eventually, a world suicide.

Preservation in small towns must incorporate this concept of environmental awareness. With this precept, preservation should include the restoration, adaptation, and renovation of *all* usable and functional structures. Society must cease carelessly razing buildings and constructing new ones. A "throwaway society" has emerged for its buildings and homes, as well as Bic Shavers and baby diapers. Whenever possible, it is our duty to conserve the resources and

energy that were utilized to construct each building.

Not only should the building material be recycled for present and future use, but the consumption of energy in the building process should be saved. Manufacturing of replacement materials must be reduced, energy for shipping and building needs to be conserved, and human resources should be directed to a more environmentally conscious activity: the renovation and conservation of the existing building stock in the United States.

It is estimated, for example, that widespread retrofitting would save nearly 8 quadrillion Btu's of energy annually — the equivalent of two new oil fields the size of Alaska's North Slope.⁸³ If we were to replace all of the existing buildings in the United States (a concept which at first sounds ludicrous, but is possible if the urban expansions continue), it would require use of the world's entire energy production for at least one year.⁸⁴ It is time we acknowledge that "America's buildings stock is one of its most significant energy investments."⁸⁵

An ethic is needed which emphasises community, family and long term health and less consumerism and immediate satisfaction. Small rural communities in the midwest are dependant upon agriculture. With this relationship, the residents of small towns are more apt to be aware of their relationship to the natural world, and their increasing duty to become stewards and not exploiters.

The small town is a part of the past that offers a future vision which may be essential for a viable, sustainable society.⁸⁶ The current preoccupation with metropolitan development and growth has created overwhelming burdens on these ecosystems. "... The ecology (in metropolitan centers) is perilously close to cracking. By contrast, a population that is spread more evenly over its

region minimizes its impact on the ecology and the environment, and finds itself and the land more prudently used, with less waste and more humanity."⁸⁷

C. DECENTRALIZATION AND DIVERSITY

The "operational definition" of rural, small town includes the concept that a particular community is separate and distinct from any other community. It is not part of an urban or metropolitan complex. The rural, small town by definition is an entity which scatters people and culture, and discourages by its own design the concentration of people in massive urban areas. The rural, small town is a political, geographic and social model which promotes decentralization and diversity of culture. This component of a rural, small town offers some insight into numerous problems that exist in contemporary life and society.

In *Resettling America*, Gary Coates argues that decentralization is an important component for structuring alternative settlement patterns and new communities.⁸⁸ The issue of decentralization applies to both urban areas and to the rural landscape, as stated:

... an urban policy for a renewable-energy-based society is simultaneously a program of urban decentralization and rural repopulation. While in some cases this would call for rural new towns, most shifts in population distributions would be absorbed in incrementally restructured existing communities.⁸⁹

Not only is the philosophy of decentralization important for addressing energy related problems, it has a major impact upon personal and social relationships, structure of government and politics, ecology, methods for industrial productions, and food and energy consumption.⁹⁰ In conjunction with the discussion of decentralization presented by Coates and his contributing authors,

Kirkpatrick Sales writes about the decentralist tradition in the United States.⁹¹

Our history shows that it is part of our culture and should be recognized as part of the solution for current and future challenges:

The decentralist tradition, no matter what, will not die, for it is as wide in the American soul as the country is wide, as deep in the American psyche as the riches are deep. . . Indeed, one gets the sense that these next few decades may provide its chance again; and more; that these decades offer the opportunity for it to establish its patterns — of localism, self-sufficiency, ecological harmony, participatory democracy — for a long time to come.⁹²

The small town in America, I suggest, is *the* tradition of decentralization which lives on. What is more physically, economically, socially, and politically decentralized than an image of the United States composed of tens of thousands, small, self-sufficient and dynamic small towns?

The concept of the diversity of "otherness" is closely related to decentralization. As noted in *Resettling America*, "A planetary civilization can only be rooted in communities made up of people who are different from each other, who sometimes disagree."⁹³ In this same sense, I suggest that the countryside needs to be settled by numerous small communities which may be different from each other. There is strength and sustainability in diversity of culture and communities, as well as individuals. One community, for instance, may approach fire prevention in a manner unlike anyone else. This, in turn, would provide planning solutions that would not be available in a society of commonly managed and organized towns.

By analogy, in agriculture there is a strong movement to collect and pro-

tect the diversity of seeds and plants. Modern agribusiness has managed to destroy and discard many traditional species of crops and plants as the industry selected only a few hybrids. As a consequence, agriculture is vulnerable to a disease to all of the plants in a particular commodity because there is no longer the immense diversity to withstand various natural stresses. We have lost many plants which have taken centuries to develop and adapt. So, like the seed and the plant, the diversity of small towns is a mechanism to assure continuity and sustainability of culture and society. The diversity, it is hoped, will prevent all of us from making the same mistakes.

D. ECONOMICS

In our modern society the cost of an activity is usually the first line of inquiry. In most preservation projects, the "bottom line" is the bottom line. Simply stated, there is more money for preservation in the cities. As noted in *Historic Preservation in Small Towns*: "In the cities, we have learned to summon relatively large sums of capital through memberships, community giving campaigns, foundation grants, fund-raising events, and manipulation of federal programs that apply specifically to urban areas. Few such resources exist for the small town."⁹⁴

Preservation of most urban historic properties in recent years has been the result of adaptive use projects.⁹⁵ This concept of historic preservation continues to receive criticism from purists. Some structures have been insensitively renovated, and the buildings have lost their architectural character and integrity. But when it is done properly, adaptive use is good historic preservation. It provides new life and vitality to a building and community. This concept of historic preservation/adaptive use is contingent upon two factors: the building must be

situated in an area that offers potential demand for commercial, retail, business, or residential use; and second, the historic preservation tax incentives, along with conventional advantages of real estate investment, must yeild after-tax profits to the developer.

Rural small towns can rarely offer these advantages to investors looking for historic properties. The preservation movement has done well in cities where building space is at a premium, and where population is growing with economic optimism. In small towns, there is "infinite" land for development, and there is usually no demand for the existing empty buildings. Economic outlooks are bleak in rural America, and despite the demographic "counterstream,"⁹⁶ the majority of rural towns and farmland are losing large numbers of people. [It appears that most rural areas experiencing residential growth are close to metropolitan centers; they have become "satellite suburbs."] Elsewhere, small towns may have prospered when the nearby mountainside is stripped for downhill skiing, or a valley is flooded for recreational use. The majority of small towns are not prime candidates for a significant number of adaptive use preservation projects.

I am not suggesting that rural preservation should not be creative in its direct impact upon the socioeconomic welfare of small towns and farms. Among the most significant rural preservation programs has been the Main Street Project initiated by the National Trust for Historic Preservation.⁹⁷ In 1979, the National Trust began the project originally for the preservation and revitalization of rural small town business districts (population of 50,000 or less). The Main Street Project was the first attempt anywhere to package a program aimed at economic development with historic preservation as one of its key components. Since its

original program, the project has expanded to over 25 states and 100 small towns. The small towns which have been selected for the project are examples of historic preservation as a working, living concept that improves and protects rural life. Main Street has proven that good preservation is also good economic development.⁹⁸

The success of "Main Street" is based upon sound renovation decisions, and cooperative efforts of community and business people to preserve their older buildings. The participants have found that people often prefer to shop in a community which has acknowledged its past, and which has preserved its unique and special built environment for all to enjoy.

And, in the midwest, valuable lessons can be learned from "Main Street" and other similar projects. For these preservation efforts emphasize an entire district, and not necessarily one great and famous structure. Preservation in small rural towns can provide economic benefits if it is realistic and cohesive. The small rural town should use preservation to keep its existing consumer shopping base, and to expand its unique affirmation of community. As small communities compete for new industry and business, it should do everything it can to improve the quality of the town. As a recent study by the Kansas Department of Commerce confirms, new businesses considered the "quality of life" in a small community as the primary factor for relocation.⁹⁹

Finally, in planning for economic vitality, small towns should recognize that "in almost all cases there is also approval of this type of (preservation) effort on narrow economic grounds. The reason for economic approval is, of course, that nothing so attracts people in our time as the architectural wonders of the past."¹⁰⁰ Small rural communities in the midwest should not be mistaken —

tourism will likely not be the major industry in the region. Few people will travel from New York City to visit a small farm community in Kansas. However, the opportunity to promote weekend or day-trips from the major metropolitan areas within the midwest is remarkable.

Small towns should promote their old buildings and market their rural culture to benefit their own community and to invite outside visitors. In a small town, the additional revenue spent by only a limited number of annual tourists and visitors can have a substantial positive impact upon the local economy.¹⁰¹

This section of the thesis has attempted to explore and develop a working preservation philosophy within the context of the issues facing contemporary, rural small towns. There has been no better time, or greater need for small town preservation than the present. Small towns and family farmers are struggling for economic and social survival.

Small town residents (and all of us) need to identify their traditions, priorities and ethics, and understand their relationship to the environment. Small town history and culture provide a link to the past; a foundation for present work and life. We can only have a sense of our future from our knowledge of the past.

Preserving historic landmarks is a major source for this identity and tradition, but it is not the only way to emphasize these attributes. Rural communities need to actively celebrate their history and culture. Preservationists, therefore, should promote community agricultural celebrations, traditional change-of-season festivals, rural craft shows, local produce days, and other indigenous "holidays." The county fair has become an agribusiness trade show; rural culture and agriculture must be restored as the highlight of this country institution. The

farmer's market continues to be a strong source of rural pride and should be established in more communities.¹⁰² Not only is it an economic benefit, but it provides another important role — urban consumers meet farm families, relationships are formed, and some sensitivity to each others' ways of life can be shared.

Everyone — including urban residents — can indirectly promote rural preservation by purchasing local farm products and other goods made in our regional small towns. Those who are concerned about the rural community, should be conscientious consumers; collective individual purchases dictate large trends in agriculture.¹⁰³

With caution and humility, there is one proviso that should always be followed. Choices in preservation are endless, but those of us who participate in rural preservation must be conscious of its context within the entire scheme of rural life and planning. As in all aspects of planning, development strategy should make the welfare of the people its central goal. It is obvious that many small town merchants, farmers and other rural residents do not have the formal education or expertise to *develop* their own comprehensive plan for historic preservation. As rural preservationists, we should heed the warning applicable to us as professional planners, by way of Ralph Matthew's research in rural Canadian planning: "Only planning experts can *design* the plans needed. But the *choice of direction* that this planning takes should be left in the hands of the people. Since it is their lives which will be affected, their goals and values should be the ones upon which planning is based. Anything else is not planning, but coercion and intimidation."¹⁰⁴

Chapter Four

TWO TOWNS WITH PRESERVATION SUCCESS: COUNCIL GROVE, KANSAS, AND WESTON, MISSOURI

This section will now be directed to an investigation into the motivations and mechanisms which have been used to accomplish preservation in two rural, small communities. Two communities have been chosen to provide a comparison of activities and issues, and to compare the preservation methods used by the respective towns. This comparison and investigation should offer insight into practical methods applicable for preservation in other small communities. It will also provide a practical, "on site" analysis of the working preservation philosophy and ethic which has been explored earlier in this dialogue.

The towns of Council Grove, Kansas, and Weston, Missouri, have been selected for this purpose. Their selection is based upon the following:

1. Each one meets the definition and parameters of a rural, small town.
2. They have demonstrated success in preservation efforts.
3. They are both located in the Midwest, (Kansas and Missouri.)
4. Their citizens initially expressed a willingness to share their experiences and opinions in preservation.
5. Both towns are accessible to the author in less than two-and-one-half hours, thus permitting numerous visits to each location.

The method of investigation included extensive meetings and interviews with the citizens of Council Grove and Weston. The interviews took place over a period of nine to twelve months. Interviews invariably led to different and interesting discussions. However, everyone was presented with a series of eighteen

questions, divided into six distinct topics of inquiry. These questions are presented for reference as part of the appendix.

I. COUNCIL GROVE, KANSAS

Council Grove, Kansas, is a town of about 2,500 people. It is located in the Flint Hills, about 30 miles south of Manhattan where U.S. highways 56 and 177 meet. This is a rural community proud of its heritage and lifestyle, and it does not hesitate to boast about itself:

People from far and wide who have visited Council Grove concede that Council Grove is a beautiful city. They are unrestrained in expressing this opinion. But its not the beauty of the city alone, Its not the fact that is one of the eleven most historical cities in the county. Neither is the fact that is the cultural and commercial center of a wide area. But it is that indefinable something known as the "community spirit" of Council Grove that is the attribute of its citizens that make Council Grove different from other places of interest. It is something which makes it unique.¹⁰⁵

Though these accolades may be a bit exaggerated, Council Grove is a special and unique place. Apparently, the area had an important history before being settled by white people. The Osage Indians often camped among the grove of trees for special meetings and events.

As early as 1821, the area was travelled by settlers searching for a more convenient trail to Santa Fe. In 1825, President Monroe signed legislation appropriating funds to establish a trail from the Missouri River to the Mexican border. In August, 1825, a treaty was signed with the Osage Indians. George C. Sibly, one of the three representatives of the U. S. Government wrote in his Journal:

As we propose to meet the Osage Chiefs in council here to negotiate a treaty with them for the Road etc., I suggested the propriety of naming the place 'Council Grove' . . . Captain Cooper was directed to select a Suitable Tree and to record this scene in strong and durable character which was done.¹⁰⁶

With payment of \$800, the government purchased a permanent right-of-way for the Santa Fe Road. The town, to this day, is celebrated as "the birthplace of the Santa Fe Trail."¹⁰⁷

Seth M. Hays was the first settler in the town, and has become its most noted historical figure. He was an adventurous entrepreneur, setting up trading posts, and the Hays Tavern. For some time, Council Grove was the only trading post on the trail between the Missouri River and Santa Fe, and it became the most active trading point on the entire trail.

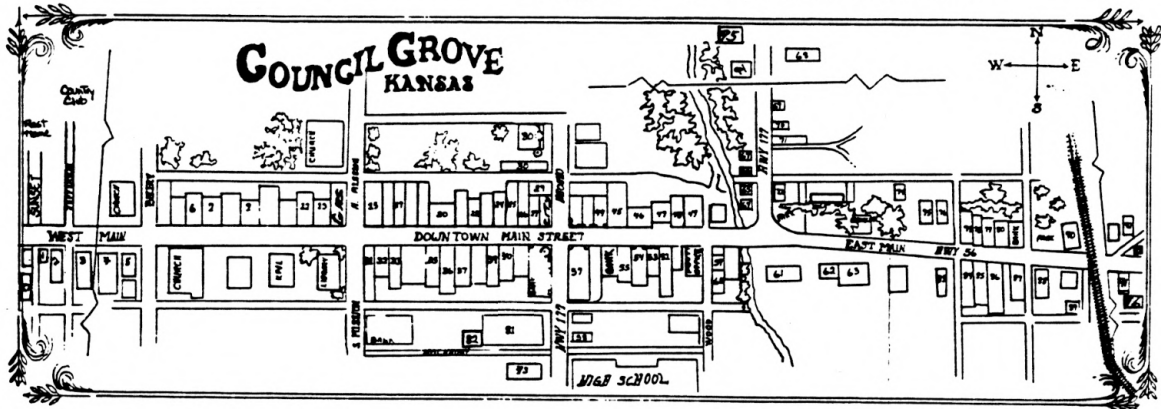
By 1863 the town had carpenters, physicians, wagon and carriage makers, blacksmiths, saloons, a meat market and a mill. However, to the chagrin of some of its residents, it was "a shame that Council Grove has not a church building in the place, and that all religious meetings have to be held in the two school houses."¹⁰⁸

In the 1880s the town entered into a tremendous building phase which ended in the 1890s. Many of the stone and brick buildings still in use on Main Street were built during this time. The records confirm a prosperous town, and one of the local newspapers, *The Cosmos*, provided the following assessment in 1892: "population of 2,500, with eight dry good stores, three drug stores, three newspapers, thirteen grocery stores, three hardwares, six churches, a large grade school with eight teachers."¹⁰⁹

Main Street is the dominant architectural feature of the town (Figure 2).

SHOP the PRAIRIE PLAZA

IN THE HEART OF THE FLINT HILLS



- | | | | | |
|---------------------------------|--|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 0 - BURGER HOUSE | 34 - C.G. REPUBLICAN | 44 - THE EMANON SALON | 63 - BOLTON CHRYSLER-PLYMOUTH-DODGE | 71 - THE PAULINE |
| 1 - ADAMS LIQUOR STORE | 35 - BRETZ SHOE STORE | 45 - INGMIRE'S PLUMBING & HEATING | 64 - THE PIZZA HUT | 72 - PLAIN WAYNE'S |
| 2 - TRIMMELL FORD | 36 - RADIO SHACK | 46 - BOSCH FURNITURE | 65 - THE DAIRY QUEEN | 73 - ADAMS LUMBER CO. |
| 3 - COUNCIL GROVE L.C.A. | 37 - BESSIE'S FAMILY RESTAURANT | 47 - THE HAYS HOUSE | 66 - TALL GRASS ANTIQUES | 74 - PAT'S STYLING SALON |
| 4 - LONG'S TRUE VALUE HARDWARE | 38 - BOSS'S RE-CREATION | 48 - JERI LEE'S SPECIALTY SHOP | 67 - A&C WESTERN SHOP | 75 - BETTLES ECON-O-WASH |
| 5 - HEDTS CONOCO | 39 - COTTAGE HOUSE HOTEL-MOTEL | 49 - DUCKWALL'S | 68 - WILSON SALES CO. INC. | 76 - BAKER'S THRIFTWAY |
| 6 - GRAUEL MONUMENTS | 40 - NAPA C.G. AUTO PARTS | 50 - OTASCO | 69 - GHERE'S T.V. - ZACH'S SHACK | 77 - POWELL'S BODY SHOP |
| 7 - MUNCY BAKERY | 41 - COLEYS TOGGERY | 51 - ALDRICH APOTHECARY | 70 - WILSON'S ANTIQUES | 78 - ROSIE'S CAFE |
| 8 - RITZ THEATER | 42 - KEN'S SMALL ENGINE | 52 - C.G. CHAMBER OFFICE | 71 - GREEN GROVE NURSERY | 79 - EASTSIDE GYM |
| 9 - RAYLIPP'S DECORATING CENTER | 43 - FURMAN'S RECREATION | 53 - THE HOME DESIGN CENTER | 72 - BINDER AUTO PARTS | 80 - THE DEPOT |
| 10 - RITZ VIDEO MART | 44 - CHARLENNE'S 'SOMETHING OLD-NEW' | 54 - TOM'S DRIVE INN | 73 - KING TIRE SHOP | 81 - HAYES CARRY OUT |
| 11 - HAEKER STANDARD STATION | 45 - THE PHOTOGRAPHY & FRAME SHOPPS | 55 - ADAMS '66' STATION | 74 - STOP-3-SHOP | 82 - HILLTOP CAFE |
| 12 - DORR'S BARBER SHOP | 46 - ELEANOR'S CARD & PARTY SHOP | 56 - THE COUNTRY HAIR QUARTERS | 75 - YADON TRACTOR REPAIR | 83 - OLD TRAIL MOTEL |
| 13 - COUNCIL GROVE BEARS | 47 - SANTA FE HOME RESTAURANT | 57 - COASTAL MART | 76 - BISSON RETAIL LIQUOR | 84 - TAYLOR'S RETAIL LIQUORS |
| 14 - BARBER T.V. | 48 - COUNCIL GROVE FLORIST & GREENHOUSES | 58 - PASTOP | | 85 - BOWMAN INTERIORS |
| | | | | 86 - HILLSIDE GARDENS |

Figure 2
Town map

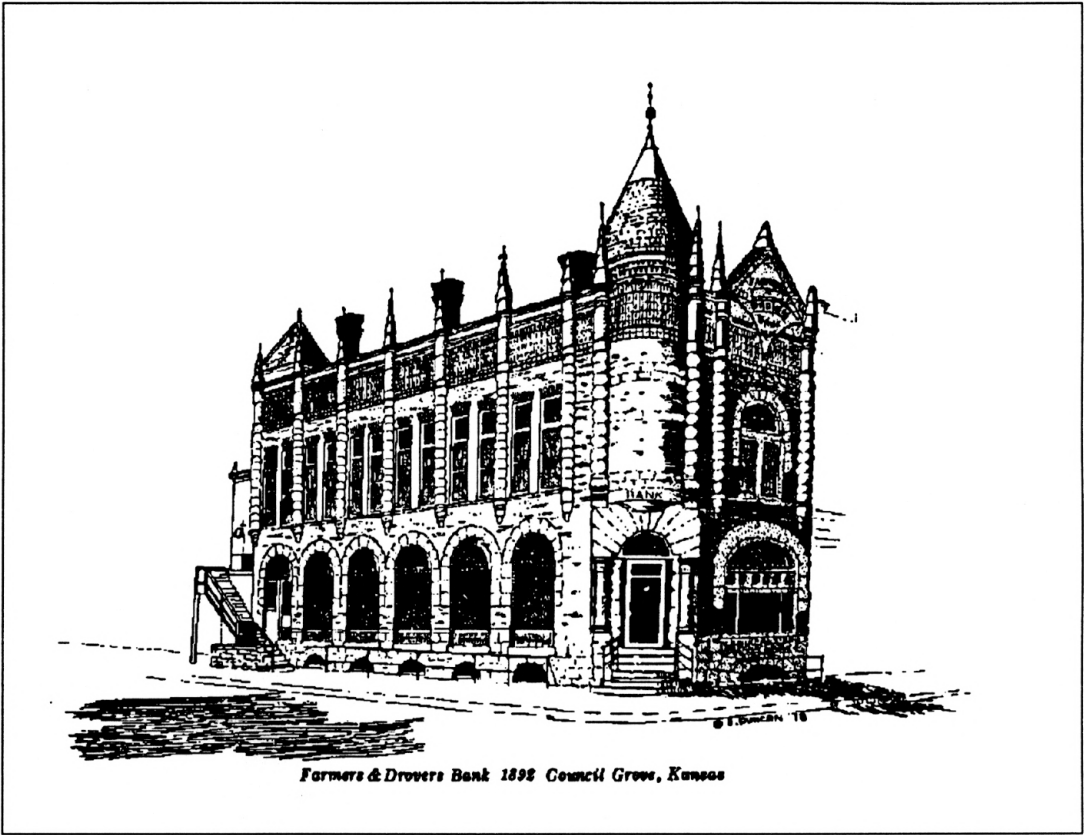


Figure 3
(Pen and ink sketch by Ellen Duncan)



Figure 4
(Pen and ink sketch by Ellen Duncan)



The Cottage House Hotel, Council Grove, Kansas

Figure 5
(Pen and ink sketch by Ellen Duncan)

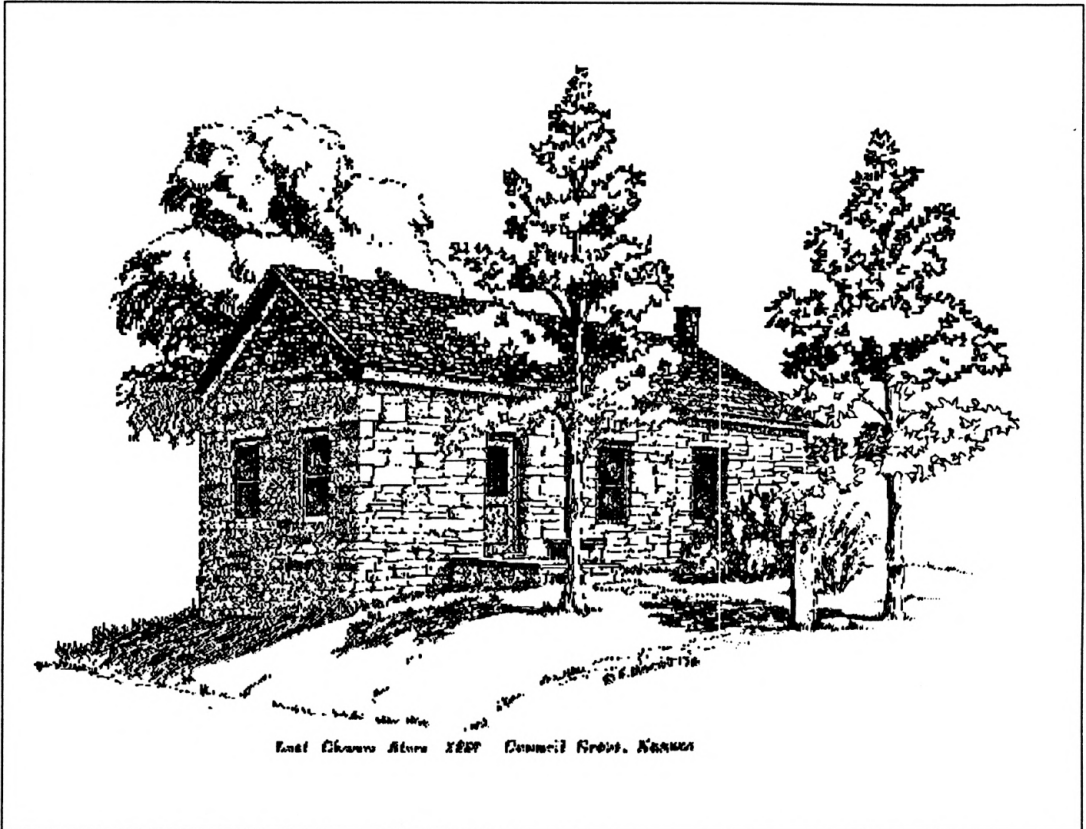


Figure 6
(Pen and ink sketch by Ellen Duncan)

The wide street was designed to allow cattle herds to be driven through the city on their way to market. The older buildings are sturdy, impressive structures constructed with limestone or brick. There have been some significant physical changes to the downtown through the installation of "modern" facades during the 50s or 60s. Generally, though, Main Street has remained physically intact, and commercially vibrant.

The Neosho River intersects the eastern part of Main Street, and caused repeated flooding in the past. Ever since the damn was built upstream, the city has not experienced a serious flood. The following table provides the most significant occurrences to the alterations of the downtown built environment since the turn of the century.¹¹⁰

1923 — IOOF Hall (223 W. Main) destroyed by fire.

1925 — New IOOF Hall built.

1937 — Gibson-Davis Implement Building 216 W. Main destroyed by fire

1938 — Commercial House Hotel razed corner of Main and Wood Streets.

1939 — New post office built

1940 — New building at 216 W Main, sheet metal shop

1960 — Gildimerster Building razed, corner of Main and Wood.

1968 — 216 W. Main remodeled for drugstore

1972 — Duckwall Building erected, Main and Wood

1973 — the Leader and Citizens State Bank Buildings razed, south side of Main

1974 — Anchor Savings built, south side of Main

1974 — Hays House renovated, North side of Main

1974 — City Hall selected at 200 Main St with addition of metal facade, and windows covered by bricks.

1975 — Metal facade placed on Trowbridge Building 113 W. Main.

Council Grove remains a vibrant small town with unique pride in its heritage and historic landmarks. There are 12 locations listed on the National Register within the City.¹¹¹ These sites make up the town's designated "Historic Tour" which can be traced on foot. Certain times during the year, local tour guides are provided for visitors.

The town has seven small to medium size industries which provide stable employment for 250 to 300 people. Substantial number of jobs in government, agriculture, services, and wholesale/retail make up the rest of work in Council Grove. There is a total of nine churches, three financial institutions, a 30 bed hospital, a daily newspaper, public parks and facilities, two nearby lakes, and the Morris County Courthouse. The majority of residences are older homes within a four or five block radius of the business district. On the northern part of town, a small subdivision has emerged, and about 4 miles north at the city lake, a substantial number of cottages and permanent residences have been built. The sur-

rounding countryside is composed of rolling hills, open farmland, and occasional streams and creeks.

The study of Council Grove is based upon observations and interviews conducted during five separate visits to the town. On my first visit, I spent most of a Saturday afternoon and Sunday morning walking through the town. I was able to visit the most noted landmarks, and discuss my interests with people at the Cottage Inn Hotel and the Hays House. From these initial inquiries, the local residents graciously recommended additional people to interview, and provided me with extensive resources and information. Each person was interviewed in an informal setting, their home, business, or a restaurant. The process was as conversational as possible, with specific references to 18 questions (*see appendix*) presented to each person during our interview. A total of 13 people were interviewed for this project. (*see appendix*)

At the outset, everyone was informed about my interest in preservation and the accomplishments made in Council Grove. It was made clear that their comments and statements were being solicited for a master's thesis in the Department of Architecture at Kansas State University. My information was gathered through note taking and the occasional use of a small tape recorder.

A wide range of information and opinions were provided through these interviews. To help assess these resources in a comprehensive manner, I have organized the topics of the interview questions into 6 categories of subjects:

- A. Purpose and Benefits of historic preservation
- B. Origin of preservation in this community
- C. Economics and Development
- D. Shakers and Movers; Organizations and Individuals

E Political Impact and Government Efforts

F. Special Factors; Miscellaneous

The following is the cumulative information gathered from our many discussions on historic preservation in Council Grove. Each category represents a collection of statements and observations made by the citizens of this community. I believe that these interviews provide insight into the preservation process in Council Grove, and help explain how this community has cultivated the past for the present, and inspiration for the future.

A. PURPOSE AND BENEFITS OF PRESERVATION

There is a general consensus in Council Grove that historic preservation is an important process to remind all who live in the town of their heritage. It is a heritage of which they are proud, and which seems to be their inspiration for the future. The town's identity with its past is closely tied to its historic structures. In particular, "The Santa Fe Trail" is basic to the town's history and identity. Among the comments on historic preservation in this town, I was told that "it simply wouldn't be Council Grove without the old buildings." The people view their structures as an integral part of their community. It would be like talking about home without the old homesite.

Another person claimed the old buildings were the "image of the community", and that the structures provided "continuity" and make the people appreciate history more. The buildings, in fact, were compared to the "roots of the family" in that the older structures were the "roots" of the community.

Another interesting point was that the relationship to past generations "is personal in history, because this is a small town where the residents actually

know the descendants to those who built or developed the town.”

Many of the people thought the preservation of the older structures was important because they were “genuine” and “authentic” buildings. There is an appreciation for “real and substantial” buildings which were built in this community. Many of the people are aware that these buildings are one-of-a-kind and not reproduced anywhere else. They are unique to the physical appearance of Council Grove, and they cannot be replaced.

The purpose of preservation in Council Grove seems to be inseparable also from a general interest in history. As was noted, “The buildings are a part of our past history — anchors, and viable things,” and that this is a way to “preserve history through regular celebration” and “regular participation.”

These interviews indicate that the community values its buildings as *symbols* and *reminders* of its heritage. Rarely, was there the discussion of preservation for architectural purposes. The buildings were important for their own sake, but if the buildings were not functional, or if they did not contribute to the heritage or “tourist value”, they may not be preserved.

Clearly, preservation in Council Grove is pragmatic, and the town’s historic preservation activities “could not be separated from the economic gains” of the town. Time and again the people of Council Grove reminded me that preservation was important culturally, but it was also important from the business point of view. “Preservation is a facet — a major resource — of economic benefits” to Council Grove.

The town has an annual celebration called Wah-Chun-Gah Days in early June. The festival lasts for two days and includes a parade, art and craft fair, entertainment, folk art, and historical tours. This event is a huge success, and

most of the community participates in some way. Though no one referred to it as part of historic preservation, I was repeatedly advised about its relationship to the heritage of the community.

Preservation reminds the citizens that Council Grove is part of the American frontier. As a famous point for opening up the Santa Fe Trail, the town has continued to nurture this identity. The past is important for identity, and the townspeople use their buildings and landmarks as a reminder of this heritage. They also use historic preservation to affirm that Council Grove is a special place now, and will be for future generations.

B. ORIGIN OF PRESERVATION

I found that the community seemed to have “always been interested in its heritage”, but that historic preservation became important “because of the three buildings torn down in the 70’s” on Main Street. One person noted that preservation actually began much earlier in this town, shortly after World War II, because there was a “quest for community survival.” Many visitors apparently told the local residents about their admiration for the older structures, and it served to “heighten their awareness” about preservation.

The first real preservation project was initiated by the State of Kansas, in its effort to preserve the Old Kaw Mission School and museum. This was an important project, but did not seem to directly impact upon future preservation activities. It appears that preservation activities really began as a “response” to the destruction of major buildings on Main Street, and a longstanding church in the 1970’s. The preservation movement gained momentum as the community realized that historic preservation was also a potential economic development

resource.

C. ECONOMICS AND DEVELOPMENT

As has been noted, one of the major benefits of preservation in Council Grove is the positive effect it has upon the local economy. The entrepreneurial spirit which helped establish this small town continues to flourish. The people of Council Grove have recognized their unique opportunity to market historic preservation for development and profits in this region of Kansas.

The Chamber of Commerce and numerous local businesses link economic vitality directly to the marketing of their historic buildings and heritage. For instance, the Hays House is advertised as being "the oldest, continuously operating restaurant west of the Mississippi." And, the Chamber's brochure states, "if you're on the trail in Kansas... plan to stop where the pioneers did... in Council Grove... the birthplace of the Santa Fe Trail. Its history you'll enjoy." (*see appendix*). It is where you can "tour 12 Registered Old West Historic Sites."

The town actively markets itself with the visitor/tourist theme, and this has become a major component of Council Grove's economy. One local banker estimates that the town is diversified with about 1/3 agriculture, 1/3 industry and 1/3 tourism.

The restoration of the Cottage House Hotel is a remarkable accomplishment. The owner, Connie Essington, has demonstrated to the community that good preservation and renovation go hand-in-hand with good business in this town. She has renovated two houses in the community. It was important to her to "demonstrate that old houses could be restored and that is was economically sound." It now appears that there is an "awareness" by most that preservation is

good business for Council Grove.

I was informed repeatedly that the "financial benefits (of historic preservation) are a key factor" for the town's support. There is a push to encourage more tourism, and to establish a "Tourism Fund" through the Chamber of Commerce. Some citizens want to expand the cultural activities in the summer to include a dinner theater, regular heritage celebration days, a farmers market, and more diversified activities which emphasize the heritage of Council Grove. The economic impact of 100 new tourists per day has been quantified and distributed through the town. It claims to :

- increase population by 459
- 140 new households
- \$78,000 in new taxes
- \$777,000 new personal income
- \$144,000 increase in Bank Deposits
- \$1,200,000 in retail sales
- 7 more retail outlets
- 111 new industry related jobs

This information is based upon a brochure from the U. S. Department of Commerce.¹¹² The statistics may be suspect, but it represents a genuine appreciation for the opportunities present in Council Grove.

Like so many small rural towns in Kansas, Council Grove has relied upon agriculture for much of its employment. With the devastating loss of family farms and the related income, most small and rural communities find themselves searching desperately for alternatives. Council Grove has suffered from the farm crisis, but it is fortunate that it may utilize the "preservation resource" as an eco-

conomic solution. Thus, it has been able to survive and look forward to economic expansion and community progress.

In many small towns, new economic development is influenced, and often controlled, by the decisions of the local lending institutions. In Council Grove there are 2 banks and a savings and loan. For the benefit of historic preservation, these institutions have actively supported these efforts. The Farmer's and Drover's Bank, in particular, has been a major source of preservation by example and business. The bank has remained in the ownership of the same family since its founding in 1882. The bank building sits on the southwest corner of Main Street and Neosho, and dramatically displays its unique name in a Gothic/Victorian frontispiece. During the 1970s the building was renovated, and regular maintenance is provided to keep the exterior in excellent condition.

The Farmers and Drovers Bank has made a huge statement about preservation through its own building. But it also provides substantial loans for preservation and renovation projects in the community. Both the Executive President and Vice President appear to be vocal supporters of preservation and affirm that "Main Street needs to be saved as a drawing point" for cultural and economic benefits. I was advised that loans were available on an equal basis for restoration and new construction as long as the loans made good business sense. "Each building proposal (old or new) is reviewed on its own merit." The economics of "tourism dollars" is of paramount interest, and the officers of the bank affirm that "the theme of what Council Grove 'is' needs to be maintained".

There appears to be some concern that historic preservation could adversely affect new building construction. It was noted by one resident that preservation "could slow changes" in the town, and that is something that should be

avoided.

The older structures in this town provide economic benefits in another way. They are good investments, and can be restored for relatively small costs. One person noted that the main reason historic preservation was successful in Council Grove is that "the buildings were substantial in the beginning" and continued to be good buildings that would outlive many newly constructed structures. Many of the town's residents told me that they preserved the older buildings "because they were built better, and had better material"; it was generally accepted that the craftsmanship of older buildings were superior to present day construction.

D. SHAKERS AND MOVERS; ORGANIZATIONS AND PEOPLE

There has been a small handful of people who are primarily responsible for the preservation successes in Council Grove. The president of the Morris County Historical Society estimates that out of its 300 members, about 40 to 45 are active in historic preservation projects. This means that this group of people at least attend meetings, or participate in a building restoration or maintenance project. Another person suggested that "not even one-half of the community really seriously cares" about historic preservation in Council Grove. It was his opinion that, in fact, only 20 to 30 persons are "significantly concerned and actively focused on it."

All of the people acknowledged the commitment and efforts of Connie Essington, owner of the Cottage Inn and two restored residences, Helen and Charlie Judd who restored and revitalized the Hays House, and Tom Cosgrove of the Historical Society. I was also reminded that the Whites of the Farmers and

Drovers Bank had been “very influential in the work on the bank building” and making funds available to preservation projects.

I was reminded that in a small town “only a few people can make a difference” and that seems to be the case in Council Grove. The few people who have chosen to work on preserving the structures of their town are active, persistent, and creative; they have the ability to procure or produce funding for these projects. The truly “influential or powerful” are not necessarily key players in the preservation activities, but they have not opposed the work. The Chamber of Commerce and the Historical Society are vehicles for these “few people” to promote their ideas of preservation. The two organizations seem to have developed a relationship which is mutually beneficial, and based primarily upon the union of preservation and economic development. The Genealogy Society contributes “through its interest in history”, and the Philamantia Club has donated plaques and markers to historic landmarks, and offers tours on special occasions. The preservation effort in Council Grove appears to be primarily influenced by a small group of energetic people, but they have managed to nurture a receptive community and have encouraged wide-spread participation, all to their continued success.

E. POLITICAL IMPACT AND GOVERNMENT EFFORT

Council Grove may be successful at preservation, but it has done so with little direct support from the local government. The comprehensive plan “has proposed a historic preservation commission”, but apparently the planning commission has not favored the idea. The Mayor and other individuals believe that a preservation ordinance had “a pretty good chance to pass”, but other people

informed me that when the idea was discussed many "businesses and owners didn't want one". There seems to be concern that an ordinance, like many land use controls, would impinge upon private property rights. The need for a preservation ordinance was only emphasized by 3 or 4 people. The others tended to believe that the private individuals were quite successful on their own.

It is worth noting that the local government's role in preservation is exemplified by its own City Hall. On the corner of Main and Neosho, the City Hall occupies a former retail store with a metal front facade and carelessly bricked-in windows along the entire eastern wall. It is an unfortunate statement to the public, and, I believe, the city government has failed to understand the significance.

Other than the issue of a preservation ordinance, historic preservation does not seem to be politically controversial. Specific actions, such as the razing of an old store or church have caused heated debate, but each situation is dealt with on its own merits. The local government, per se, provides little advocacy or protection for significant buildings. The local citizens are the watchdogs.

The State government was acknowledged to have provided assistance to the Morris County Preservation Society, and there were numerous "positive experiences with the people" from the State Preservation Office. Most of the assistance was in technical areas of preservation such as materials, construction, or design problems.

Kansas State University was also noted by many people for its effort in developing design/preservation guidelines for the downtown area.¹¹³ One person found "the guidelines from the Kansas State Study to provide the future goals" for preservation in Council Grove. She concluded, however, that even with the effort to adopt the study, she "doubts that the City will do it."

F. SPECIAL FACTORS; MISCELLANEOUS

Council Grove was settled by adventurous capitalists who, I was told, were "highly educated people from the East". These early settlers were not farmers, but retailers and business people who seemed to select the area for its "good soil, the Santa Fe Trail and the chance to make a good living" in a thriving new town. One comment, which was repeatedly expressed, is that the early buildings "were substantial" and well built. I was advised that this was due to the fact these settlers were relatively wealthy and educated, and the native limestone provided an ideal building material. This observation is most poignant, for the historic preservation in this town was not deliberate until the 1970s. Prior to that time, the structures survived because they were sound, well-built, stone or brick buildings. Unlike many other small towns, Council Grove had an inventory of buildings and landmarks that had not deteriorated. They were here waiting to be appreciated and preserved.

This small rural town continues to have a daily newspaper, The Council Grove Republican. It provides a regular forum for community news, gossip and entertainment. It also has a tremendously unifying effect. Many of the people referred to the newspaper as an essential part of the town's pride and community awareness. It offers regular information on local events, and is a symbol of community pride and heritage. The newspaper, in its unique way, is an ongoing cultural resource which is cherished as much as the buildings in Council Grove.

One other special factor which was discussed in relationship to preservation is the emphasis of history in the school system. Most of the people interviewed related their early interest in history to their present interest in historic preservation. As one person noted, their "history was always more important

than anything else”; it “came first, way before historic preservation”.

At the root of this history is the Santa Fe Trail and the impact that Council Grove had upon this segment of the American adventure. The people of this small town do not want to forget this link with the past. It tends to be a continuing part of their individual and collective identity. All historic preservation in Council Grove flows from the signing of the Treaty in 1825—the event which also gave the town its name. This segment of American history is filled with myths and fantasies, and Council Grove is a very real part of that legend. To the people of this town, it gives them something very special to inherit and celebrate.

G. OBSERVATIONS

There is no specific formula that explains the success of preservation in Council Grove. However, there are some ingredients which, I believe, are the source for these accomplishments. Standing alone, they may not give this town purpose for historic preservation, but combined, they seem to work well.

From my interviews and observations, I suggest that Council Grove has accomplished far better preservation than most other small rural towns in this region, for the following reasons:

1. A significant and special history: This town is part of American history on a grand scale. Its relationship to settling the West and the Santa Fe Trail is special, and is an uncommon origin and past when compared to many small farming towns in this region.

2. The early buildings were constructed solidly: The structures on Main Street were mostly built in the 1870s through 1880s. They are built of limestone and brick and have proven to be strong, durable structures. The major highways

have since passed by Council Grove, leaving it in much of its original state. The town experienced little growth and expansion. The citizens have been able to seize upon their sleeping structures and use preservation when it was ready for them; there was a large inventory with excellent physical integrity ready to be appreciated and celebrated.

3. Hard working and dedicated people: There is a small group of people in this rural community who have worked hard at promoting preservation. They have put their own money and resources on the line to affirm their convictions. They are realists who value their heritage, but know that it must make economic and practical sense to preserve a building. Their efforts are tangible, and they are showing the rest of the community how to prosper with historic preservation.

4. Financial support: The financial community, especially the Farmers and Drovers Bank, is willing to encourage preservation through making sound business loans. Good business is the primary motivation, but appreciation of the town's heritage seems to also contribute to their role in preservation. The Whites have a long tradition in this town, and they are committed to its success.

5. Economic necessity: The decline of the rural farm community may be the most important factor to explain the new found appreciation of preservation in Council Grove. The decline in agricultural prosperity has had a dramatic impact on this town, as in all other rural communities in the midwest. To survive each town has had to scramble for economic benefits and resources. In Council Grove, its heritage and the older structures and landmarks have offered a unique resource for economic vitality and small scale tourism. Thus, the farm crisis and decline in rural prosperity has forced the community to come up with a solution, and preservation is the name.

II. WESTON, MISSOURI

The town of Weston, Missouri, provides an interesting comparison to Council Grove. Population is nearly 1,700, with an additional 1,000 people residing within close proximity on farms or rural lots. The town is located in a valley, about 30 miles northwest of metropolitan Kansas City on highway 273 and on the Missouri River banks. In contrast to Council Grove, Weston was designed with small, winding roads which meander through the hilly terrain. Trees dominate the landscape, and there is a general feeling of being in a small European country town with an unusual complement of southern architecture. The southern tradition is well documented, as evidenced by a newspaper article appearing in 1897:

. . . the entire city is densely shaded by a heavy growth of forest and ornamental trees, amid which nestle many old typical southern homes which are the delight of all who see them. In bringing the sheets to a grade many of the blocks and lots were terraced, and in course of time have become carpeted with a luxuriant growth of bluegrass, and around other places heavy retaining walls of stone have been erected, the whole making Weston a most picturesque city. . . The city has excellent public schools, employing four white and one colored teacher.¹¹³

Weston was first established as a small settlement in 1819. However with the federal government's acquisition of the land known as the Platte Purchase in 1837, 2,000,000 acres of land attracted the first significant collection of people to the location of Weston. In the same year, Weston was platted, and was inhabited by settlers mostly from Kentucky, Tennessee, and Virginia. The town received its name from Tom E. Weston, who bestowed his name on the village because, as he

wrote in a letter home, "The town I named Weston, as it was at that time the farthest town west in trade."¹¹⁴ Local historians note that the next flock of residents were immigrants directly from Austria, Germany, and Switzerland. By 1853, Weston had a population of 5,000 and was the second largest river port in Missouri.

The early history of Weston set in course the development, culture, and architecture of the community. In the introduction to *Old Homes* by the Weston Historical Museum, the impact and influence of early settlers is cogently observed:

As influence came to the earliest settlers, they built (usually over the original log cabin) stately columned Federal Style two story houses fashioned like the homes they had left in the southland. The definite influence of the two cultures is felt in the town's architecture, with here and there a touch of the French. The aggressiveness, industry and thrift of the Europeans coupled with the graciousness, leisurely living and extravagant hospitality of the southerners made the town unique.¹¹⁵

Beginning in 1853, Weston experienced two fires which destroyed a significant portion of the downtown business district. There were five major floods within the period of ten years; the last one in 1862 caused the Missouri River to move two miles west of the town. Suddenly and dramatically Weston was no longer a river port town. By 1890, Weston's population had decreased to 1,000.

The matriarch of Weston, Bertha I. Bless, subtitled her little history publication as "Historical data about a town that rose to fame in 13 years and was forgotten for nearly 50 years."¹¹⁶ I suggest, however, that Weston was really forgotten for nearly 100 years. From the history records, Weston experienced

very little development, and few, if any, new enterprises or significant structures were established in the town in the 20th century.

The town of Weston manages to stay relatively prosperous due to the revenues of the local tobacco crop, the long standing success of the McCormick's Distillery which was established in 1856, and the nearby military base of Fort Leavenworth.

In reference to preservation, the most significant events occurred in the early 1960's. First, the Weston Historical Museum was established in 1960. The building previously served as the Weston Baptist Church, and is well located on Main Street. Second, in the early 1960's (there is disagreement as to what year), Bertha I. Bless organized a tour of the old homes of Weston. The event was an overwhelming success. It attracted thousands of visitors, and served as the inspiration for community-wide preservation efforts. The homes tour continues as one of the major annual events in Weston.

One person has suggested that historic preservation in Weston in the 1960's corresponds directly with the preservation efforts that were gaining widespread recognition on the east coast. William R. Hull, Jr., a resident of Weston, served as a U.S. Representative to Congress from 1955 to 1972. During this time "many influential people from Weston visited Washington and learned what was going on there, and realized what they had in Weston."

Many of the wealthy homeowners have traditionally cared for their structures—it was simple pride and regular house maintenance. The majority of the antebellum homes have now been restored and preserved with a high degree of integrity. These individual restoration projects are the result of private homeowners. Many of the families are third and fourth generation Weston families.

Historic Weston, Missouri

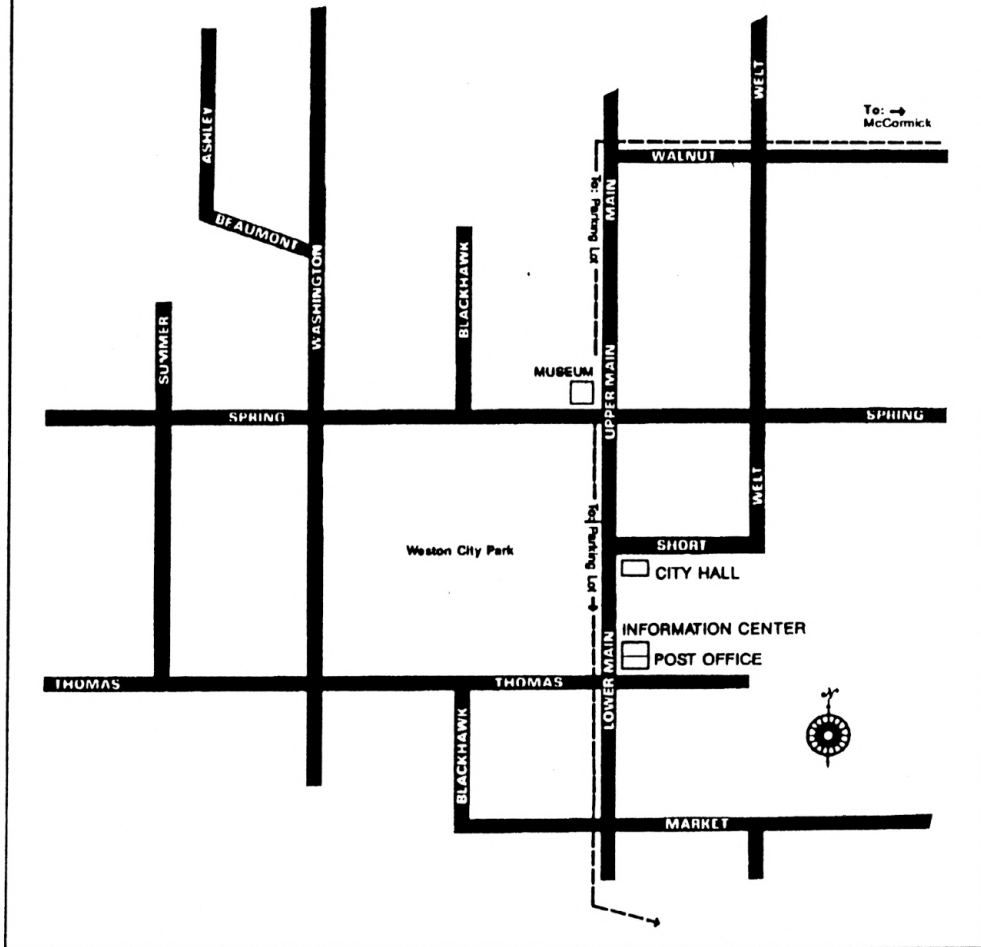


Figure 7
Town map

Other homes have been purchased by new residents, who have moved to Weston for "its small town benefits, and historic buildings."

Any evaluation of preservation activity in Weston demands the distinction between the residential structures, and the commercial, downtown business district. When homes were being restored in the 1960's, downtown had numerous vacant buildings and was rapidly deteriorating. During the years when thousands of people participated in the homes tour, the commercial district had very few businesses and customers.

In 1972 a two block area composing mostly of downtown was designated as an Historic District on the National Register of Historic Places. This designation was the first step of a long range planning program developed with the assistance of Mid America Regional Council (MARC). The essence of MARC's recommendations identified the architectural resource of downtown Weston, and provided a planning and marketing scheme to promote this major asset of the town. This scheme followed the style of the National Trust "Main Street" program.

The next major step was the retention of Robert Claybaugh, an architect from Kansas City, in 1983, who performed a detailed architectural study of the downtown district. Claybaugh provided design and renovation guidelines for the facade of each structure. The renderings remain in City Hall, and serve as the primary architectural guide for any renovation project concerning buildings within the district.

Upon the conclusion of Claybaugh's work, the city adopted an ordinance protecting the two block district of Downtown in October, 1983. (see appendix) The ordinance provides standards adopted by the National Park Service, com-

monly used by most communities throughout the country. The ordinance only controls facade restoration and alteration, and provides a great deal of flexibility to the owners of the structures. The local ordinance does not mandate the owners to do any affirmative act of restoration or improvement; it only restricts and controls any new changes or projects.

Following the recommendations of MARC, the community also organized the Weston Development Corporation (WDC) in the early 1980's. This not-for-profit corporation serves as the vehicle and clearinghouse for most of the commercial activity in the community. It is both a "chamber of commerce" and an "information center." WDC is officed on Main Street, and maintains a significant role in the preservation and economic development of downtown Weston.

As a result of the comprehensive plan formulated by MARC, downtown has changed significantly from its apparent demise in the 1960's. By 1981, only 14 of the 42 commercial buildings in downtown Weston were vacant. In 1990, most of the structures have received significant renovation of the facades, and are active, functioning retail shops. The downtown district has been developed as a day-trip tourist center, and attracts hundreds of visitors daily. During a busy fall or summer weekend, the streets are filled with people visiting the small shops and gazing in the highly decorated windows. Even during weekdays in the dead of winter, it is difficult to find a parking place. In 1990, less than 5 storefronts were unoccupied. Presently, at least, the people of Weston appear to have achieved preservation success in both the residential and commercial communities.

With the use of a similar methodology and technique for the study of Council Grove, Kansas, I have attempted to gather some information to explain

Weston's success in historic preservation. I made a total of five visits to Weston, and interviewed ten residents. The folks of Weston were hospitable, informative, and all graciously shared their opinions in response to my inquiries. John Elsea, an officer of the Bank of Weston, was most helpful in sharing his impressions and visions concerning preservation methods in Weston. He served as an "introduction" to many of the people interviewed. The same 18 questions used in Council Grove were presented to each participant of Weston during the course of the individual meetings.

The following observations and information is presented in the same categories as utilized in the study of Council Grove. Similarly, the interviews provide helpful insight into the preservation process and mechanism of Weston, Missouri. These interviews confirm that preservation activities in rural, small communities cannot be easily identified and explained through one or two "solutions." Preservation in Weston is a combination of many complex factors, people, buildings, place, economic needs, politics, and timing.

A. PURPOSE AND BENEFITS OF PRESERVATION

Preservation in Weston has mixed purposes and benefits. The preservation of residential structures is clearly for the benefit of the "families themselves." Many of the more than 100 antebellum homes are identified in reference to original occupants. The present day tenants are proud of their homes, which are often "part of a family— they represent generations of the same family."

Though preservation of the home may represent purely personal motives, there is clearly the association of the structure with family and community heritage. The old homes are a source of immense pride and even "a status symbol",

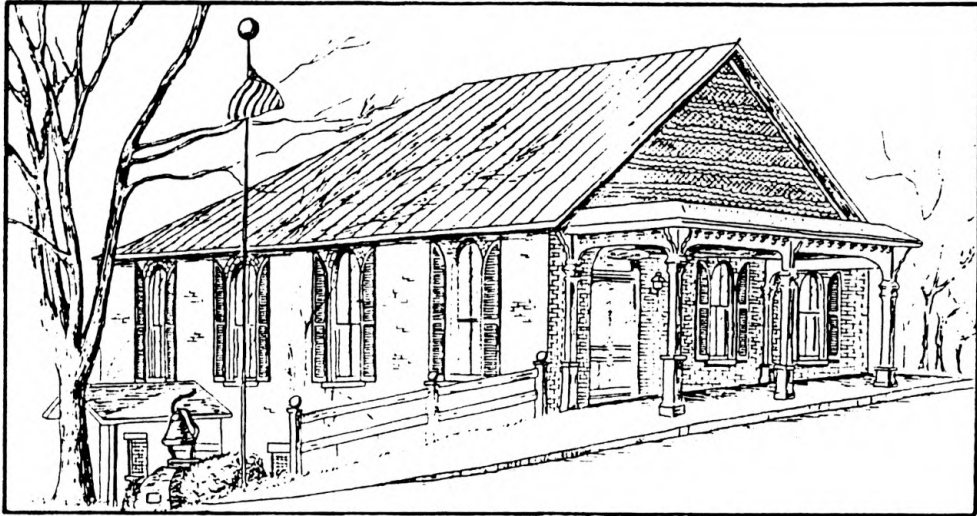


Figure 8
Weston Historical Museum, Incorporated
601 Main Street
(Pen and ink sketch by Victoria Anne Hart Ingalls)

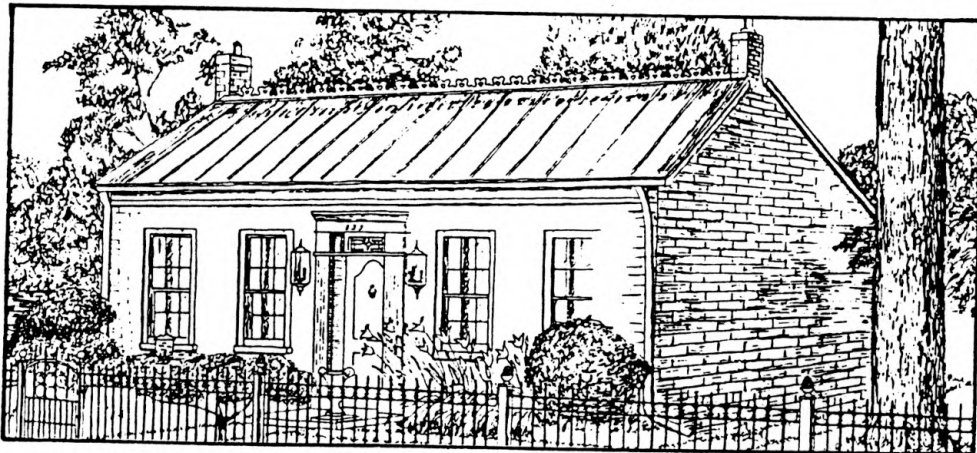


Figure 9
La Petite Maison
839 Ashley Street
(Pen and ink sketch by Victoria Anne Hart Ingalls)

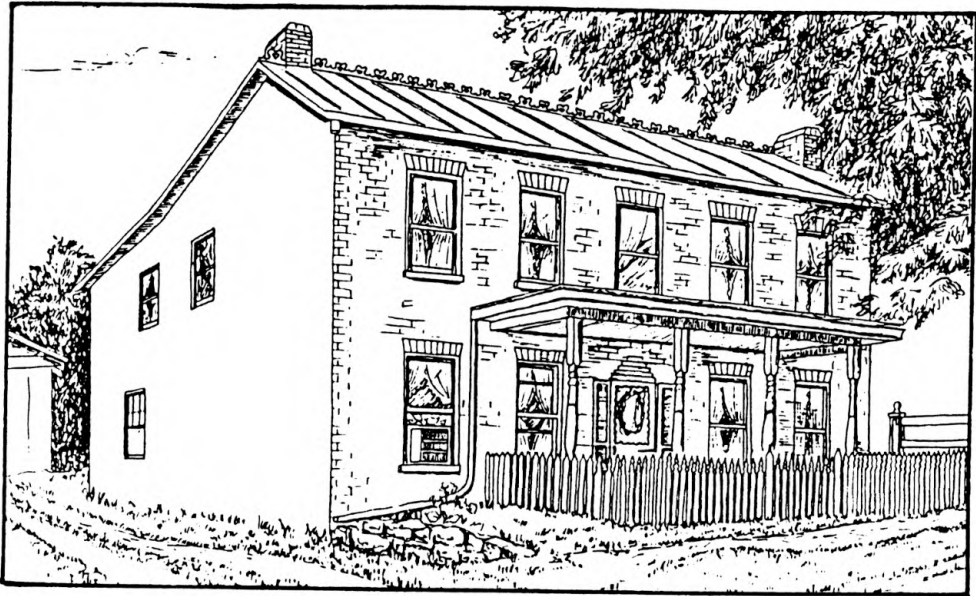


Figure 10
The Old Parsonage
708 Spring Street
(Pen and ink sketch by Victoria Anne Hart Ingalls)

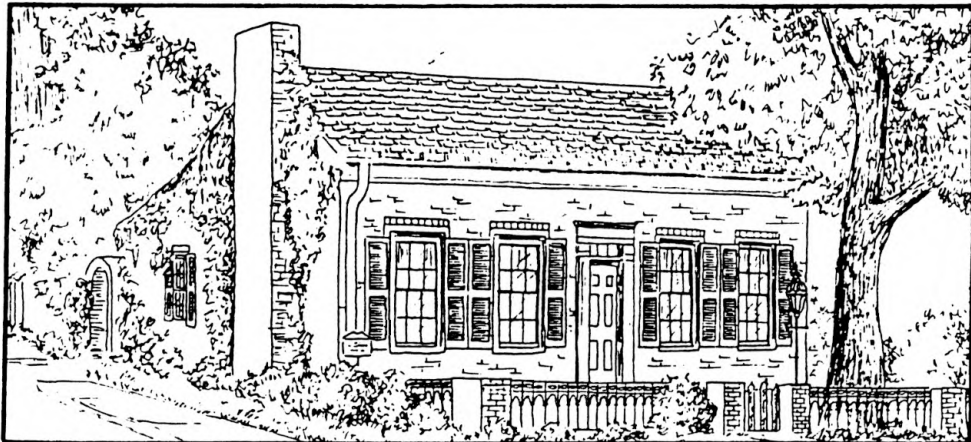


Figure 11
Woodbine
601 Blackhawk Street
(Pen and ink sketch by Victoria Anne Hart Ingalls)

but most often, people of Weston recognize that “we need to preserve the past... and to grow and to keep the past in mind, and not just for economic purposes.”

On the other hand, when preservation in the commercial district is examined, the purpose is more practical and economic. In Weston, “preservation of the downtown district and economic development are inseparable.” Beginning with the MARC study, Weston has focused most of its economic development strategy through preservation and tourism. The old storefronts and quaint shops are the attraction to lure the visitors. Downtown preservation is clearly recognized as “the central part of having so many visitors”; and the “financial incentive is necessary,” in turn, for the success of the preservation of downtown.

The residents of Weston seem to enjoy and celebrate the buildings downtown for their own architecture and historical significance. But the buildings are used as an economic development tool, and the community has no hesitancy to identify this as the primary function of the commercial structures. As a result of the preservation efforts downtown, most people agree that there has “been an absolute impact upon the community in a very good manner.” Downtown success and preservation of buildings are mutually dependent: it is the opinion that the only way to keep a vibrant downtown is the continued preservation of their buildings, and the only way to keep a commercial downtown is to preserve the old buildings. “Without preservation we may not have a downtown, but we would continue to have a population . . . a pleasant small town.”

With the obvious economic benefits, the people of Weston also gain an unusually large selection of restaurants, and speciality shops. The many annual events (totalling 12) are promoted by the WDC in its “Catch the Glow” promotion. (*see appendix*) All of these events are directly related to historic resources

the history of the town. The Weston Historical Museum has over 200 members and offers regular, "mini-tours" of the museum and older homes. The relationship of the Museum to conventional preservation is strong, but those active in the Museum are not necessarily active in preservation efforts.

One person noted that she "had not thought of the small town environment and its culture as having anything to do with preservation, but I think it is a good idea." The same person concluded that "just seeing these different buildings—built solid, cared for all of these years by people who cared enough for them—is a reminder of people before us, so that we may have it today." This conviction seems to dominate the opinions of most people in Weston. When it comes to the downtown, this inspiration continues, but the inspiration is also motivated by practical, economic goals and planning.

B. ORIGIN OF PRESERVATION

Preservation in Weston appears to have been a way of life— at least in relationship to the personal homes of its citizens. The large number of older, stately houses have been well cared for over the years. Most of the larger Federal Style structures have been occupied by families "who had the resources to keep them in good shape" and the people of Weston "always recognized their residential neighborhood" as an important asset.

In the early 1960's the efforts of two prominent citizens provided the direction for widespread achievements in *both* residential and commercial preservation. Dr. R. J. Felling was a local physician and historian. He is claimed to have a degree in architecture, but pursued medicine as a means for a livelihood. Dr. Felling devoted extensive energy toward the establishment of the Weston

Historical Museum, and promoted the recognition of the town's heritage and architecture. Bertha I. Bless, was the editor and owner of the local newspaper. In the early 1960's, she was the primary force behind the homes tour, and was a founding member of the Museum, as well. She is described as an "energetic and persistent" woman who knew how to get things done. Her publication, *Weston - Queen of the Platte Purchase* (1969) is still sold through the Museum, and regarded as the definitive source of all Weston history and folklore.

Mrs. Bless was the first person to "emphasize the case of downtown for specialty shops", because she "saw the problems of regular retailers competing with Kansas City". Thus, with her influence and the recommendations made by MARC in the early 70's, the preservation of downtown Weston was set into motion. The active participants in these preservation efforts will be evaluated in the following sections.

C. ECONOMICS AND DEVELOPMENT

The town of Weston has combined economic development and historic preservation into one concept— the Weston Development Company (WDC). This not for profit corporation has served as the "Main Street" developer, and promotes the "downtown as the major economic asset in the community." The people of Weston seem to widely support the efforts of WDC, and it's membership reflects a broad base of citizens and businesses. The current promotion reads: "Weston - a town untouched by time, full of people, and fighting to keep it that way."

WDC advertises in Kansas City media, and encourages people to take "day trips" or weekend excursions to the town. But some citizens of Weston are

not so confident that Weston as a small tourist town is a good idea. "In Weston", one person noted, "you cannot even buy a pair of shoes or blue-jeans; you have to go to Leavenworth or Kansas City." The almost exclusive conversion of downtown to gift shops and tourist attractions has created a lack of regular retail stores. The downtown is "maybe an image, which is more important than reality—like the facades of the buildings themselves."

It was acknowledged that the town "needed money and population in order to have preservation," but there is, at the minimum, a segment of the population which questions the long term viability of tourism in Weston. Most of the shops downtown are occupied, but there is an extensive rate of turnover. As a result, the buildings are not being properly maintained, and only the "facades are the predominant focus - causing superficial preservation." One person claims there is a "real danger of fire or other major hazards", because there is not enough revenue from the rent to bring the buildings up to code. Thus, the question remains whether downtown Weston can survive on tourism alone, and if the funds generated through tourism can finance long term renovation and preservation of buildings. Most people in this community are convinced that tourism is the solution. But still, some people remain skeptical. It was even suggested that the "loss of downtown may be a good result, because the current shop owners would then focus their money in their homes." One outspoken critic noted ironically that "more people who live in Weston are in the Town North Shopping Center in Kansas City, than in downtown Weston on a Saturday."

Despite these critics, the WDC and most of the retail businesses rely upon tourism as further economic development for this segment of the town. Recognizing that there is no more room for "growth of downtown preservation", there

has been the expansion and development of other attractions to bring the tourists to town. The McCormick's Distillery is expanding its facilities to attract people for daily tours, and retail sales. Even though no alcohol is distilled at the site, it still is promoted as one of the major distilleries in the United States. (All of the alcohol is produced at distant facilities, but most of the national bottling remains in Weston). During the summer, McCormicks attracts large numbers of people. A small downhill skiing enterprise has been introduced within 5 miles of the community. It is hoped to supply the needed tourists during the winter months. The impact of this enterprise is not yet measurable. And as a third element, the town has managed to get the State of Missouri to expand a nearby park and campground. It is hoped that this site will bring numerous shoppers and tourists to downtown.

In comparison, the economics of residential preservation appear to rely upon different factors. The local economy is "based upon two sins—drinking and tobacco." The distillery employs a large number of residents (over 100). The local agriculture is unique in its regional production of tobacco. It is estimated that tobacco alone brings in about 10 million dollars per year. It is also less vulnerable to market swings like many conventional crops.

It is estimated that about 1/3 of the households commute to Kansas City and Leavenworth for work. But this may be a major factor why many of the older homes are well preserved. Many of these people are employed at Kansas City International Airport and Fort Leavenworth (both about 15 minute drives). North Kansas City takes only 30 minutes. As a result, many of the older homes are occupied by people who do not depend upon the local tourism dollars. It was observed that the residential community has a far better chance for contin-

ued preservation than the downtown "because they're occupied by people who have money independent of Weston's tourism economy."

The economic direction of this community, like Council Grove, is influenced largely by the local bank. The Bank of Weston has played an active and visible role in the preservation of the town. It has made an undeniable commitment to preservation in two distinct ways. In 1985, the bank renovated and restored the "Main Street Building" which had remained vacant for nearly seven years. The building was almost entirely rebuilt, and replaced "with old brick with the appearance of that used in Weston at the turn of the century... An antique teller's cage with glass and iron decorations was installed, and the floor was covered with small hexagon shaped tiles . . . to create the feeling of another time. Brick sidewalks and stained glass windows were used to attract visitors to the original home of the Bank of Weston on Main Street Weston, Missouri."¹¹⁷

The Bank's preservation project is noble and performed with attention to architectural detail. It is ironic, however, that the building is only a "museum bank", and that no banking transactions occur at this location. (*see appendix*) The "real" bank is now located on Highway 45, in a modern facility. Does this represent the "facade mentality" of downtown preservation?

I believe the Bank's more important and genuine commitment to preservation has been its active financial commitment to preservation projects. It is the major financier for home mortgages, and renovation loans. The Bank is well aware of the value that the older homes provides the community in "both economic and cultural terms."

The Bank of Weston has also been one of the most active supporters of the WDC. It provided a generous and unique program for the development process

in downtown. Loans with 0% interest were offered to any store owner for facade improvement. The Bank provided up to \$5,000 per building, on a matching grant basis. Surprisingly, out of the 32 facade restoration projects, the Bank only provided 3 loans under this generous program.

The town of Weston is benefiting from preservation; the shop owners and restaurants are making money from the tourists who are attracted to this small town because "people are looking for roots." The downtown facades look well preserved and tastefully renovated. But is this preservation only image, and can it be sustained economically? Most people in Weston believe it is working, and will continue to improve. Yet, there are some serious questions which remain unanswered. All of its citizens are not so certain that the economics of tourism can sustain downtown Weston on a long term basis.

The houses, however, have proven to be another story. The 100 plus antebellum homes are a source of personal, family pride. They are maintained through incomes that are not so dependent on local tourism. The home values continue to appreciate, and people from outside of the community are increasingly viewing these homes as a unique alternative to city living. Weston, in part, relies upon commuting for a portion of its citizens. This provides economic diversity and stability for many of its residents, which in turn, is good for residential occupancy and preservation.

D. SHAKERS AND MOVERS; ORGANIZATIONS AND PEOPLE

The impact upon preservation by Bertha I. Bless and Dr. R. J. Felling in the 1960's and 1970's cannot be overstated. Their visions and perceptions of preservation for Weston continue to influence the town. Other people have picked up

the cause, and continue to emphasize preservation. Clearly there are a number of people who are the primary leaders, and are described as the "WDC types". In addition, 250 members of the museum are "always interested" in preservation, but are rarely active supporters. The people who participate in preservation represent a "cross section, of both young and old." It was also noted that "the most active preservationists do not live in old houses." The old homes tour in recent years included homes of predominantly new residents.

There is the opinion that a large segment of the community is concerned about preservation, but one person claims that it is "the new people who are the active preservationists, most long term residents are not active." Perhaps, however, the most visible form of preservation— restoring and maintaining an old house— is performed regularly by "most common folks who are doing the daily work." This is evidenced by the large number of preserved and restored homes throughout town.

The WDC is acknowledged as "the main vehicle" for preservation in Weston. Its continued promotion of downtown Weston focuses the communities resources and energies. All special events are "monitored" through the WDC, and the preservation theme dominates their advertising. With the leadership of a few dedicated people, the WDC has organized and developed preservation as a primary focus of all development activity. This organization maintains its leadership, and as a result, has a direct impact upon all significant architectural, economic, and planning decisions in Weston.

E. POLITICAL IMPACT AND GOVERNMENT EFFORT

The City of Weston, has provided support and encouragement for preservation, but it has "not made much policy . . . the non-government associations are more directly involved in organization" than is the City government. The local government takes a somewhat cautious role, and finds that it is "very important not to interfere with a person's property rights."

The City did adopt its own preservation ordinance in 1983. As has been noted, the ordinance is primarily a designation tool which limits adverse changes to the facades of the downtown historic district (*see appendix*). Apparently, the majority of people think "the designation is enough—there is no need to extend it." Yet, some people claim "expansion would be good to include control of building additions and demolition."

Another suggested change included expanding the paint selections which the ordinance imposes on the downtown district. This existing limitation should "not be necessary because the buildings are not a shrine."

A number of years ago an ordinance was proposed to include certain residential properties. It was strongly rejected, and it has not come forth for new consideration. Its failure was due primarily to "misinformation" according to one person. It does appear that the people of Weston are willing to accept governing control (although very limited) on their commercial property, but not their homes. Controlling individual homes was described as "spot zoning, and difficult to keep up— it creates management problems." The objection, I believe, is more fundamental— "the individual, residential property owner wants to do their own preservation thing."

Finally, it would be remiss to discount the significance of the original MARC study on the town of Weston. MARC, as a quasi-governmental agency, provided at a crucial time, a long term planning concept that includes preservation in a comprehensive economic development scheme. This plan received overwhelming acceptance by the leadership of Weston. Preservation has been successful in Weston, in a large part, because of MARC's ability to identify the structures of Weston as cultural and economic assets. The study was performed at the request of the community, and MARC gave it the credibility and expertise to set the process into motion at a very crucial time in the comprehensive plan of Weston.

F. SPECIAL FACTORS; MISCELLANEOUS

Weston was settled by southern farmers who knew what they wanted—superb land to raise hemp and tobacco. They found it in Weston, and the town flourished. It “rose to fame in 13 years”, and during this relatively short period of prosperity, the town was built. The structures included southern styled Federal homes, mixed with cottages representing the other traditions of Europe. The economic prosperity enabled the owners to build over 100 homes before the Civil War which are the pride of this small town and individual families.

The boom times have never been equalled since these early days. The majority of buildings were constructed in Weston in the first 15 to 20 years of prosperity. The flood of 1862, which moved the Missouri river 2 miles west of the town, caused an abrupt end to the incredible growth and success of this port town. With this dramatic change in commerce and population, Weston was left with more buildings than it needed. The town was “forgotten”, and bypassed by

other means of transportation. As a result, most of the building stock of Weston was not altered or destroyed. There was no demand for commercial development. Many of the traditional local families continued to occupy their homes, and based upon tobacco income, as well as employment from McCormicks distillery, there was a sound, but not expansive local economy. Things stood still for a long time in Weston.

Throughout its history, Weston has had a local newspaper. The previous editors and owners were the Bless family. It was used as a source of community information and pride. It also was a mechanism to promote the opinions of local citizens, including Bertha I. Bless. It appears that The Weston Chronicle has been a strong force in community awareness and unity. During the 1950's and 1960's it was a major tool to encourage renewal and preservation of Weston, as visioned by its owner. Currently, it maintains an active role, reporting local news and activities.

Finally, the physical relationship to metropolitan Kansas City has been a double-edged sword for Weston. Kansas City has depleted the retail base of Weston as people increasingly shopped in Kansas City. This, also, caused the town to experience negative, or stagnant, population growth. The lack of growth and decline in retail activity have prevented destruction of the older buildings. In turn, now that the use of the commercial buildings depends upon tourism, the physical proximity to Kansas City is a major attribute. The short drive for over a million potential tourists is now the key to Weston's revival of the downtown district.

G. OBSERVATIONS

As has been suggested previously in this inquiry, the components of preservation in a rural small town are complex, dynamic, and interdependent. Weston has shown an uncanny ability to rise from a long period of hibernation and to awaken with extraordinary vigor and enthusiasm. The town of Weston has emerged as a vibrant little town. The accomplishments in preservation are visible, and continue to flourish throughout the community. Serious questions linger about long term preservation and economic dependence on tourism. However, overall preservation success and achievement, at this time, cannot be denied.

The primary factors for preservation success in Weston can, in my opinion, be identified as follows:

1. An early economic and building boom: From 1840 to 1853 Weston experienced rapid and significant prosperity. In this short time, the town grew to 5,000 citizens, and hundreds of structures were built. In its earliest years, Weston was blessed with an abundance of structures which were built well, and have lasted over the years. The success of the early settlers enabled the construction of many quality homes and commercial properties.

2. Diverse cultures: The original settlers were southern hemp and tobacco farmers. Their affection for southern architecture defined the style of many of the homes built in Weston. With the second flow of settlers, European architecture and heritage influenced the direction of the town. This combination of cultures provided a rich blend of architecture and social life which continues to be preserved today.

3. The isolation of the town: The change of the river in 1862 dramatically

altered the town. Its main commercial activity was lost, thousands of people eventually left the community. Weston was isolated, and was forced to survive on its agriculture and a limited number of business enterprises. This was a small town which ceased to grow, and was "forgotten." Its existing structures continued to stand, and there was no growth which would have otherwise encouraged widespread demolition or alteration of the built environment.

4. Relative, but limited, prosperity: The agricultural base of Weston has always remained sound. As a result, significant but limited numbers of residents have maintained a level of economic prosperity and security. Thus, many of the older homes— especially the buildings owned by the wealthier, traditional families— have been well maintained. The owners have been able to provide excellent maintenance, which has enabled quality preservation work in the 60's, 70's and 80's.

5. Timing of preservation and limited options for downtown: The business district of Weston had deteriorated substantially, and by 1970 there was little commercial activity downtown. Conventional retail shops could not compete with the big city, and something needed to be done. Fortunately, historic preservation was being recognized as a tool for economic development. In Weston it provided the obvious resource for developing a tourist trade. With the assistance of outside consultants, it became the only game in town. Downtown Weston needed help, and preservation was the prescription, based in part, by the times and the increasing popularity of historic preservation nationally.

6. Dynamic, hard working people: The early preservation movement was directed by a small group of energetic and visionary people. They provided enthusiasm for this small town and proved that the historic resources were signifi-

cant. The continued efforts of a small group of community activists, who have a passion for preservation, is a key component for the success of preservation. On a more humble and personal level, dozens of citizens make preservation contributions through regular preservation and maintenance of their private homes.

7. Financial support: The Bank of Weston has demonstrated an unusual dedication to preservation. This institution is willing to finance projects that many other small town banks would reject. It is creative and outspoken in its support of preservation, and the downtown/tourist concept in particular.

8. Proximity to urban areas: Weston may have been able to stay in existence as a small town with its significant, but limited economic base of agriculture and local industry. The past proves, however, that this alone did not provide adequate commerce for its downtown, commercial district. Also, many of the local homes continued to be vacant until outside people purchased them within the last 20 years. The local urban areas—Leavenworth and Kansas City—have provided the formula for continued preservation of these two distinct assets of Weston. Individuals are able to commute to nearby cities for work, enabling them to remain in Weston as dedicated homeowners to renovate structures that would otherwise be vacant. The proximity to the large urban populations, within a short drive, gives this community the opportunity to attract the unique “day-trip tourist.” As one person aptly noted, “the nice thing about tourism is that it brings money, and people go home at night.” Thus, this small town can remain small, and there are revenues to justify the use and preservation of building in the business district.

III. COMPARISON

These two small communities exhibit an exceptional commitment to their respective heritage, lifestyle, and continued prosperity. Council Grove and Weston are examples of historic preservation activities which celebrate the relationship of the past to the present and future.

Different preservation accomplishments have emerged in both of these towns. Most notably, Weston has excelled in its preservation of both residential and commercial buildings through different processes. Council Grove has few homes that receive preservation status and most efforts in Council Grove have been centered in the business and retail section. Council Grove simply was not blessed with the exceptional older housing stock found in Weston.

The efforts in downtown Weston are significant, but there is a difference between its commercial district and the commercial activities in Council Grove. Weston is well organized, and has preserved most of its facades, but the town is without a place for its own people to shop. The Weston approach to preservation of downtown is an effective use of buildings, but it may not be a cohesive process for a sustainable, and independent community. Preservation in downtown Weston is a very fine balancing act which could crumble under economic hard times.

Residential preservation in Weston, on the other hand, appears sound and cohesive. Weston must continue to resist the possibility of becoming a bedroom community. Possibly a more even balance of retail uses downtown would be a step in the right direction. In turn, preservation of the commercial district would be enhanced through preservation of the retail needs of its own citizens and the dynamics of a working, whole community would be encouraged.

Council Grove has a different problem— it is relatively isolated from any major urban environment. With this reality, Council Grove has required a more diverse, but basic economy with fewer luxuries. The small downtown is primarily for its own residents. The tourist dollars that flow into Weston are more difficult to attract to the Flint Hills of Kansas. As a result, the structures in Council Grove which are not in regular use are deteriorating and receive less attention. The community tends to be more “collective” in its preservation efforts, and it demonstrates a more conscious, regular reminder of its heritage and history. Council Grove will always have a “cowboy” feeling about it, but that is what its heritage is about. This town is more rugged, and its buildings are a symbol of this characteristic. However, a little more attention to architectural details, and improved organization and promotion could improve the quality of historic preservation in Council Grove.

Strangely, both of these towns have common stories and developmental features. Each community was built on a major route of transportation—Council Grove on the Santa Fe Trail; Weston on the Missouri River. Both communities flourished and prospered. Grand ideas for future prosperity were anticipated by all. Yet, they were both isolated and forgotten when their link to transportation was transformed and weakened. The Santa Fe Trail was essentially abandoned, and the interstate highway system bypassed Council Grove. Weston lost its access to the river with a dramatic change of the natural environment. It was lost in the valley, and the highway system also passed it by.

These facts are both symbolic and functional. There is a common thread which helps explain, in part, why preservation has been successful in both towns. The majority of architecture was developed in the earliest days of both Council

Grove and Weston. Then, without exception, the economic and population booms ended, and the towns remained initially the same. In both situations the communities had a significant number of structures which were not destroyed. Had the prosperity continued, expansionism would probably have brought about much demolition and alteration. With this combination of prosperity and isolation, these two towns were able to hibernate and to keep their built environments in relatively good shape. Now, when social, economic, and political forces recognize the older structures and historical resources, both of these towns can (ironically) benefit from their lack of change and growth.

Chapter Five

ADDITIONAL ISSUES AND AREAS OF STUDY

This investigation has revealed that there are numerous factors and subjects which may have an impact on preservation in small towns. By necessity, this paper is limited in scope, and cannot adequately address all of the relevant topics. This research and investigation has demonstrated that certain general issues require continued evaluation. It is suggested that the following areas of study are significant in how they relate to rural small town preservation. For those who are concerned with this subject, this condensed and general discussion, should serve as a preliminary reference for more detailed, substantial research and exploration:

1. The massive shift of the rural population to urban centers has far-reaching economic, social, and political ramifications. In *First Majority - Last Minority* John L. Shover states, "As far-reaching and significant as the rural transformation has been more amazing is the fact that it has been so little noted . . . the ramifications have not ceased. Some of the most vexing of the social paradoxes of our time follow its wake."¹¹⁸

Why has this transition of modern life received so little attention? The rural/urban transformation is fundamental to the loss of rural and farm communities; it is a major factor for problems and social chaos in the metropolitan centers of this country. We need to understand the cause of this change, and explore possible alternatives which offer more equilibrium and diversity in size and location of communities.

2. How have the federal and state governments' policies affected rural

small towns? The government plays a crucial role in economic development and other planning issues. For instance, the lending restrictions financed through Farmers Home Administration and Farm Credit Services encourage lending for only new construction. This policy has no economic basis, and could be easily modified. Renovation of existing farms and homes is almost impossible through these programs. Further, most economic development policies tend to promote an industrial/commercial model, only appropriate for large urban centers. Rural economic development is poorly understood by many government officials. A new rural economic initiative is sorely needed on a regional and national level.

3. Farm policy has a direct impact on rural communities. Numerous studies have shown that the policies formulated by the USDA have decreased the number of small, family farms. Loss of these enterprises has caused small towns to lose commerce; the farm population is decreasing annually. The USDA, state governments, and all citizens should promote policies which encourage family farming operations. Agricultural diversity is good for the farmers, consumers, and the environment. What agricultural policies and programs should be encouraged for this change in farming?

4. The National Trust for Historic Preservation is the main organization which defines and directs a national preservation policy. What has been its role in rural preservation, and small town issues in particular? The National Trust has the capacity to do much more in the area of small town preservation. This institution must expand its boundaries in preservation, and provide substantial funds, consultation, and energy to rural and small town preservation. Development of new rural programs within the Trust are being explored; less talk and more action is needed.

5. The studies of Council Grove and Weston reveal that transportation plays an important role in a town development. Much political debate occurs about the funding of major highway projects. Does the interstate highway system benefit most small towns, or are there only a few "winners"? Also, alternative means of mass transit should be examined in relationship to small town and rural planning. A comprehensive transportation and energy program could do much for the continued health of rural communities.

6. Our society has accepted the notion that new is better than old; that large is better than small. The combination of these concepts discourage the preservation of historic resources in rural communities. These are modern philosophies which need close scrutiny and reeducation. These issues must be explored on the level of individual and personal psychology, as well as social and political analysis. I am convinced that education and a "heightened sense of consciousness" can reverse this contemporary dogma, and that appreciation for the older and less complex may, in fact, become appreciated again.

Chapter Six

CONCLUSION

I. THE NEXT GENERATION FOR SMALL TOWN RURAL PRESERVATION.

This thesis has attempted to explore the meaning and purpose of historic preservation in rural small towns. During this inquiry, it has been repeatedly demonstrated that historic preservation is far more than the restoration and preservation of individual landmarks, or clusters of historic building. Preservation includes people, activity, heritage, community, and conservation of natural and cultural landscapes. As noted by Robert E. Stipe, author of *The American Mosaic*, "The American preservation scene has changed to an extent undreamt of by the authors of the Preservation Act of 1966. Many of the issues that will have to be faced during the next 20 years have their origins in the extent and speed of that change."¹¹⁹

Stipe further concludes that rural preservation is "now emerging as one of the most essential but difficult of all preservation tasks for the next 20 years. Central to the problem is that the outlook for the profitable, adoptive use of many important rural buildings and landscapes throughout the county ranges from poor to terrible."¹²⁰

The future of small rural communities is, in fact, bleak. The demographic statistics provide evidence that rural population has been reduced to a startlingly low percentage of the nation's citizens. The implications suggest that fewer people will live in small rural towns, and there will be less than 2 percent of the population classified as farmers by the end of this century. This reality does not bode well for preservation in rural small towns in the Midwest.

The dilemma facing many rural communities requires immediate and effective efforts from local, regional, and national government. Private citizens—business people, teachers, laborers, housewives, professionals, and residents of all activities—must also directly participate in the social and political process of maintaining their local small town. As this paper has demonstrated, only a few people are needed to make a small town conscious of its own historical and architectural resources. However, time is not necessarily on the side of rural preservation. The rural "crisis" demands prompt and effective policies and action.

One issue which deserves immediate attention, and effects symbol, activities, and policy is the term "historic preservation" itself. We are no longer simply concerned with the preservation of "historic" buildings. The philosophy and activities of this process known as "historic preservation" are far more expansive, optimistic, and affirmative of all resources. We should do away with this title and begin using an alternative vocabulary, replacing this rather archaic term with "heritage preservation", "resource preservation", or simply "preservation and conservation". Maybe it is counterproductive to select and designate only one word or phrase to describe the activities and ethics discussed in this paper. All of these concepts have legitimate purpose, and should not be dismissed simply because they do not fit into a convenient definition.

Expansive, new directions in preservation are most important when we address the issues of rural, small towns. As this thesis has attempted to emphasize, preservation of rural communities is the preservation of a heritage and lifestyle. Buildings, alone, are not the essence of a rural preservation philosophy. It is the built environment which provides physical and symbolic structure to a way of life which we call the "small town". It is possible, of course, to preserve

vacant buildings and to admire a town as a museum, but this endeavor would lack the "heart" and spirit of a small rural community. Small towns cannot be preserved/conserved unless the life of the small town is nourished and encouraged. This is a way of life which is threatened and may in fact, become nearly an extinct social and political institution in our lifetime.

Ironically, more planning efforts and resources are provided for protection of extinct species of some animals and flora than are supplied to this threatened species of American culture. To address the problems facing small towns a national and regional agenda should be formulated and clearly articulated.

II. A NATIONAL EMERGENCY AGENDA.

The National Trust has failed to provide the leadership required for federal legislation and policy direction for rural communities. It continues to be dominated by East and West Coast urban oriented members, with occasional token recognition of rural Midwest preservation issues. If a specific rural agenda cannot receive high priority within the National Trust, it would be advantageous to find an alternative vehicle. If no other existing organization is appropriate for this challenge, small town and rural citizens may need to organize a new national preservation policy group.

On a national level, allocation of federal funds has a major impact upon rural communities. Specific questions and policies need to be addressed; the federal bureaucracy must demonstrate that programs will promote sustainable and healthy rural communities. Among the many federal programs, it is obvious that policy decisions and funds for health care, economic development, agriculture, infrastructure projects, and housing are destroying the vitality of small

towns.

Nationally, our elected representatives must be put on notice— rural America demands its fair share. If the rural population does not receive economic and political support, the officials from these districts may eventually have no constituents. The Congress has control over the federal budget, and therefore, it has the power to make some immediate and constructive changes. It is suggested that the following six point "emergency agenda" would be an appropriate starting point to produce immediate benefits to rural small communities on a national scale:

1. Small town settlement zones: Provide tax incentives to purchases of existing structures in small communities that are "distressed" or declining in population. Conditions for long term occupancy and use would encourage "re-settling" of small towns, and preservation of buildings.

2. Improved mass transit between small towns: Small towns need better transportation networks to promote commerce, and to provide access to other communities at economical rates. Private transportation is too costly and destroys the environment.

3. Overhaul the farm credit system: Federal farm policy encourages huge, corporate farming. The programs need to be directed toward more diverse and smaller farming activities. Further, lending policies prohibit renovation of older homes and farming buildings, and promote only new construction. Policies should be changed immediately to offer loans for renovation and restoration of existing structures.

4. Rural economic development funding: Direct funds to rural communities for improvement and promotion of local economic initiatives. Priority

should be given to businesses of 50 employees or less. Only environmentally safe industries should receive funds.

5. Tax credits for renovation and preservation expenses: Preservation/conservation deserves financial incentives. Buildings should be viewed as resources, which deserve the government's highest priority to promote and protect. Business expenses receive preferential tax benefits; why not similar benefits to conservation of resources? The arbitrary standards for historic preservation tax credits need to be overhauled.

6. Rural homesteading program: Large numbers of houses are deteriorating in small towns, and continue to be unoccupied. At the same time, millions of city residents are without housing, or live in substandard structures. A massive national program should be developed to utilize the resources of the city for homesteading and renovation of small town housing stock. Urban young people could provide the work force for renovation, and learn valuable trade skills for continued employment. Many of the small towns are ideal locations for the retired, or other people living on government assistance; location of jobs is not necessary for these individuals.

III. LOCAL AND REGIONAL INITIATIVES.

On a local and regional level, the time has come for the recognition of preservation as an integral component of all planning procedures. State and local governments must develop policies that help preserve and conserve the built environment. In turn, rural communities deserve better planning, which will require serious discussion and policies for local preservation.

It is also apparent that local and regional governments cannot develop

and promote small town preservation without the participation of the "private sector". Local communities should incorporate preservation as a mission of their existing institutions, such as the Chamber of Commerce or Historical Society. If these organizations are not responsive to preservation issues, local and regional preservation alliances should be developed. A network of local and regional preservation interests will raise public preservation issues to a higher, more respected level of political consideration.

As suggested throughout this study, a working philosophy for small town preservation requires that buildings are regularly used by people in their work and play. For those people who believe that rural small towns are important, it is imperative that they participate in the process to preserve and promote this valuable and "great American institution".¹²¹ Clearly, there are forces (intentional and coincidental) that are threatening small towns and they require a vigilant resistance.

In order for us to preserve the built environment and other resources of small communities, we must make sure that small towns are active places for people to live and work. Few rural communities can support isolated landmarks or resources on limited budgets; landmarks and resources need to be used, they must be part of the community. A preservation ethic "is an attitude recognizing the continuity of life, the continuum of values and meaning reflected in the built environment and the human molding of the landscape... A preservation ethic would never deliberately allow a useful structure to fall into disuse." In small towns, in particular, we cannot afford any other approach to preservation.

In the end, all preservation efforts in rural communities will be judged by their long term sustainability. Short term answers will not suffice. Each commu-

nity has its own heritage and special buildings and sites. On a national scale, the resources may have little historical or architectural significance. However, on a more personal level— individual, community, and regional— a particular resource may have profound meaning. In small towns it is the uniqueness of place, people, and community which makes the difference. In small towns, it takes only a few individuals to determine if preservation will be successful and important to its citizens. It is the people of the community, I am convinced, not the impressive buildings or grand history, who make the difference for continued, long term preservation of their heritage and resources. And therefore, if there is concern for the preservation and conservation of rural small towns, the next generation of the preservation movement offers dramatic opportunities. The opportunities cannot be ignored; if they are, rural small town culture and buildings may be gone before we know it.

Endnotes

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7. *Ibid.*, 41.
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38. See a discussion of small town economic options in Edward H. Flentje, *Kansas Policy Choices*, Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1986.
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Council Grove
Brochure

Appendix I

RULES AND REGULATIONS
HISTORIC BUILDING DISTRICT
PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
WESTON, MISSOURI

Appendix II

1. General Guidelines

The Planning and Zoning Commission of the City of Weston, Missouri, hereby adopts as general guidelines for rehabilitating buildings in the Historic Building District, The Secretary of The Interior's "Standards For Rehabilitation".

A copy of the Standards For Rehabilitation issued by the Secretary of the Interior are attached hereto as Appendix A and incorporated by reference herein.

As additional general guidelines, the Planning and Zoning Commission hereby adopts the standards, set forth in Ordinance No. 9.004.1, which created the Historic Building District, and which are as follows:

A. In reviewing an application for a proposed undertaking that involves a color change or alteration that affects the external appearance of a building, structure or part thereof, or any appurtenance related thereto or that affects the interior spaces in any public building, the Commission shall approve such proposed undertaking, only if it is satisfied that the historical and general architectural character of the building, structure or appurtenance will be properly preserved.

B. The Commission shall not approve such undertaking unless it makes a determination that it is compatible with other buildings and structures in the District, and with open spaces to which it may be visually related in terms of form, proportion, scale, configuration, arrangement of openings, rhythm of elements, architectural details, building materials, textures, colors, and location.

C. The Commission may prepare and recommend to the Board of Aldermen, with the review opportunity to the general public, a plan for the future development of the Historic Building District which, following adoption, shall be utilized in review of any proposed development or renovation in the Historic Building District.

D. The Commission shall make a determination in any proposed new construction or renovation of existing buildings or structures shall be in character with the surrounding neighborhood and further, shall determine if there are any adverse effects to the general welfare of the City and to the preservation of the property values of the owners of the property within the City.

2. Facade Study, General Guidelines

The Planning and Zoning Commission of the City of Weston, Missouri, hereby adopts as general guidelines for the facade of buildings located in the Historic Building District, the contents of Chapter 3 of the Facade Study of Weston, Missouri, by Restoration Associates, a division of Solomon Clabaugh Young, Architects, Inc., and the contents of Chapter 3 are specifically incorporated by reference herein.

3. Facade Study, Specific Guidelines

The Planning and Zoning Commission of the City of Weston, Missouri, hereby adopts the contents of Chapter 4 of the Facade Study of Weston, Missouri, by Restoration Associates, a division of Solomon Claybaugh Young, Architects, Inc., and contents of Chapter 4 are specifically incorporated by reference herein.

4. Procedure and Forms

1. Before enlarging, altering, repairing, or repainting any building, structure, humanly constructed object, or environmental feature within the Historic Building District of the City of Weston, Missouri, any owner or possessor of a building, located within such district, must first make application with the City Engineer, for a Historic Building District Construction Permit.
2. Any person intending to construct a new building, structure, humanly constructed object, or environmental feature within the Historic Building District must first make application to the City Engineer for a Historic Building District Construction Permit.
3. The form of the application for a Historic Building District Construction Permit, is hereby approved, attached hereto and incorporated by reference herein.
4. The City Engineer, after receiving an application for a Historic Building District Construction Permit, from an owner or possessor of land within the Historic Building District, shall first review the application to insure its correctness and completeness. The City Engineer shall then notify the Chairman, or in his absence, the Vice-Chairman, of the Weston Planning and Zoning Commission, of the filing of the application and shall provide the Chairman with a copy of same.
5. After reviewing the application, the Chairman shall docket the application at the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Planning and Zoning Commission. The Chairman may, in his discretion, call a special meeting of the Planning and Zoning Commission, to take up and consider such application for a Historic Building District Construction Permit.
6. The Planning Commission shall review the application for a Historic Building District Construction Permit, and in such review shall consider the following factors:
 - A. Is the proposed renovation or new construction compatible with the buildings, structures, and humanly constructed objects already within Historic Building Districts?
 - B. Is the proposed renovation or new construction compatible with open spaces to which it may be visually regulated?
 - C. Will the historical or architectural character of the existing buildings, structures, humanly constructed objects, or environmental features of

the Historic Building District be preserved?

7. If the Planning and Zoning Commission finds, upon considering the application, that certain elements of the proposed renovation, restoration, alteration, or new construction are not in compliance with their rules and regulations, the Commission may make suggestions to the applicant, which would bring the proposed work into compliance. Thereafter, the applicant may amend the application, and resubmit the application, to the Planning Commission. After review of the amended application, the Planning Commission may approve the amended application, or return the amended application, to the applicant, for further amendment, with appropriate suggestions. In any event, the application must be approved or denied by the Planning Commission, within sixty (60) days after receipt of the initial application for Historic Building District Construction Permit or within thirty (30) days after receipt of the last amended or modified application, whichever is later.

Any applicant shall be notified of the meeting dates of the Commission and must be given the opportunity to discuss the application with the Commission.

8. Whenever the Planning Commission recommends disapproval of an application for Historic Building District Construction Permit, it must render a written report to the City Engineer and provide a copy to the applicant explaining the reasons for the decision.

9. Any person who intends to demolish any building, structure, or humanly constructed object anywhere within the Historic Building District, must first obtain an application for a Historic Building District Demolition Permit. Such application shall be handled in the same way and under the same procedure as an application for a construction permit. In order to approve the application for a demolition permit, the Planning and Zoning Commission must determine that the proposed demolition is not detrimental to the preservation of the Historic Building District. The Planning and Zoning Commission will consider the following criteria, in addition to the other guidelines set forth in these rules and regulations:

A. The historic value of the building or structure by reason of age or association with important figures or events; or as evidence of the aspects of the history of the City; or as an embodiment of the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or a method of construction.

B. The visual and spacial relationship of a building or structure to other structures or buildings within the Historic Building District.

C. The state of deterioration or disrepair or structural

unsoundness of a building or structure, and the practicality and economics of rehabilitation.

D. If the Planning and Zoning Commission determines that a structure, building or humanly constructed object is a nuisance or prevents a dangerous condition, the Planning and Zoning Commission will make a written request to the City Engineer and the Chief of Police to exercise their powers granted under the Nuisance Ordinance of the City.

10. Any landowner, intending to gift over the facade of his or her building to the City of Weston, Missouri, shall first, in writing, notify the Planning and Zoning Commission of the proposed donation. Such written notification shall include a proposed valuation and pertinent details about the reason for the donation. After receipt of such written notification, the Chairman of the Planning and Zoning Commission shall place the matter of the donation on the agenda of the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Commission. The Commission may, by a majority vote of the members present, agree to accept the donation. Thereafter, the facade of the building will be supervised, managed, and controlled by the Planning and Zoning Commission, acting as the Historic Preservation Commission, in accordance with these rules and regulations.

11. Any applications to designate historic landmarks or districts within the City of Weston, will be referred to the Commission from the Board of Aldermen. Upon receipt of the referral documents, the Chairman shall docket, for consideration, the proposed landmark or district at the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Commission. The Commission shall then respond in writing at the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board of Aldermen.

12. The Board of Aldermen will submit to the Commission for the Commission's consideration and review, any proposed changes to the exteriors of public buildings, structures, street furniture, City parks, civic areas, and public facilities within the Historic Building District. The Chairman shall docket that matter for the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Commission and the Commission shall report back to the Board of Aldermen at their next regularly scheduled meeting.

13. Any applications for variances within the Historic Building District shall be first referred to the Commission by the Board of Aldermen, before submission to the Board of Zoning Adjustment.

14. The members and officers of the Commission are authorized and encouraged to assist the Weston Development Company, the Weston Historical Museum, and other private businesses, within the City, to fulfill the intent and purposes of Ordinance 9.004.1 and these rules and regularions. Toward that end, any solicitation

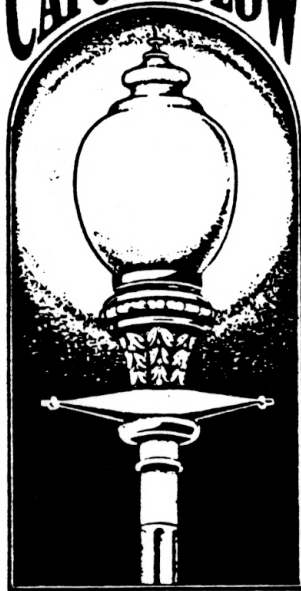
or request for grants or gifts on behalf of the City will be referred by the Board of Aldermen to the Commission for its report.

15. The Commission may, through the City Treasurer, maintain an account for restoration purposes within the Historic Building District. Thereafter, with the approval of the Board of Aldermen, such funds may be appropriated and spent for employment of technical advisers, administrative costs, and other costs directly related to the renovation and preservation of the Historic Building District. Any public or private funds received by the Commission for such purposes, shall be maintained and extended in accordance with regular City procedures by the City Treasurer, City Clerk, and the Mayor, with express approval and authority of the Board of Aldermen.

SPECIAL EVENTS

1991

CATCH THE GLOW



WESTON, MISSOURI

ACTIVITIES ARE PLANNED
AND SPONSORED BY THE
CITIZENS OF WESTON
AND ITS ORGANIZATIONS.

The Many Ways to Historic Weston



For further information contact:
WESTON DEVELOPMENT COMPANY
802 MAIN STREET • P.O. BOX 83
HISTORIC WESTON, MISSOURI 64098

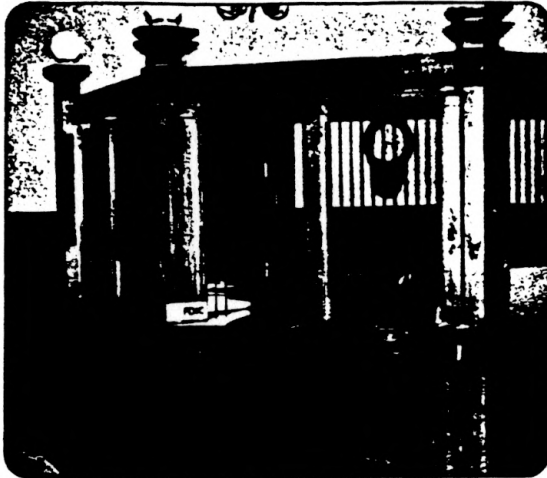
(816) 386-2909

INFORMATION CENTER HOURS:
10:00 A.M. TO 4:00 P.M. — TUESDAY THRU FRIDAY
10:00 A.M. TO 5:00 P.M. — SATURDAY
1:00 P.M. TO 4:00 P.M. — SUNDAY
(Closed Monday)



Weston Brochure

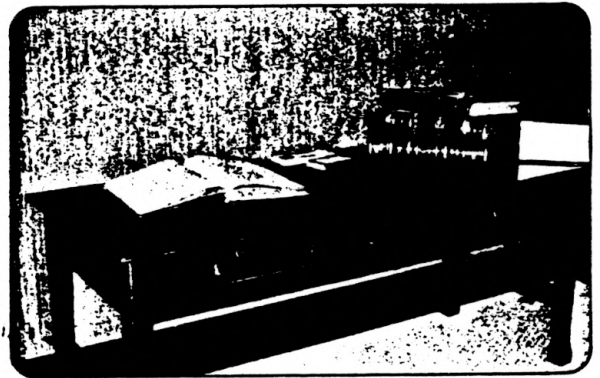
Appendix III



In October 1985, a decision was made by the Bank of Weston to restore the Main Street Building, and demolition work on the exterior was commenced. The modern look of the sixties was completely removed and replaced with old brick with the appearance of that used in Weston at the turn of the century. Windows were returned to their original locations, and the ceiling in the lobby was raised to the height of fifteen feet and covered with an old moulded tin ceiling which came from the second floor. An antique teller's cage with glass and iron decorations was installed, and the floor was covered with small white hexagon shaped tiles.

The Doppler building was restored to its original storefront look with the high ceiling that had remained in that building through various remodelings. The Doppler building is now occupied as an insurance office.

The furnishings in the bank include an oak bench and captain's chairs, and an oak board of directors table which were used by the bank for many years. An old cannonball safe and a rolltop desk along with antique record books from the bank's vault create the feeling of another time. Brick sidewalks and stained glass windows were used to attract visitors to the original home of the Bank of Weston on Main Street, Weston, Missouri.



Pamphlet by the Bank of Weston

Appendix IV

Questions presented during interviews

A.

1. What does historic preservation mean to you?
 - a. Is preserving and restoring old buildings your idea of preservation, or are there other areas— i.e. special events, artifacts other than architecture, etc... ?
2. Why does this community emphasize preservation?

B.

1. How is the history of the town associated with the community today?
 - a. How is it related to your work and family?
2. Is there a particular source for your interest in preservation or town history?
3. Any special education programs?

C.

1. What are the cultural benefits of preservation, and what would the effect be without preservation here?
2. What is important about small towns to you?
3. Would you stay here if there wasn't preservation?
 - a. Is it important to you?; why?

D.

1. How does preservation impact upon your town's economy and growth?
2. Is historic preservation important to the "vitality" of this community?
3. What is the availability of loans for renovation and rehabilitation work? Is it difficult to procure?

E.

1. Why do you live here?
 - a. Born/chosen?
2. What are the reasons for your town's success in preservation?
 - a. The buildings?
 - b. A unique or special history?
 - c. Community interest— the extent of support?
 - d. Who are the major forces?
3. Are there special organizations, activities or fund raisers?
4. Diversity and age of people in preservation?

F.

1. Are there many conflicts about preservation?
 - a. Any problems with private ownership vs. "public interest"?
2. What is the amount of government participation? i.e. municipal funding, policy making, consultation?
 - a. Would a preservation ordinance be important?
3. What, in your opinion, are the main reasons for successful preservation in small towns?

Interviews

Council Grove, Kansas

Shirley McKlintock	January-March, 1989
Kevin McKlintock	January, 1989
Neosho Fredenberg	January, 1989
John White	February, 1989
Henry White	March, 1989
Mr. Judge	April, 1989
Mrs. Judge	April, 1989
Norman Tornquist	February, 1989
Don McNeil	April, 1989
Tom Cosgrove	March, 1989
Mayor McClarety	March, 1989
Connie Essington	February, 1989
Mrs. Houdy	March, 1989

Weston, Missouri

John Elsea	July-October, 1990
Carla Adams	July 1990
Mayor Baker	December, 1990
Mr. Bless	September, 1990
Mrs. Bless	September, 1990
James McPherson	December, 1990
Mrs. McPherson	December, 1990
Jennifer Moore	December, 1990
Librarian	October, 1990
Marian McPherson	October, 1990

SMALL TOWN RURAL PRESERVATION:
CULTIVATING OUR PAST FOR THE PRESENT AND FUTURE

by

RONALD SCHNEIDER

B.A., University of Kansas, 1975
J.D., University of Missouri-Kansas City, 1979

AN ABSTRACT OF A THESIS

submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree

MASTER OF ARCHITECTURE

Department of Architecture
College of Architecture and Design

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
Manhattan, Kansas

1991

ABSTRACT

Historic preservation has now developed as an integral planning component in most major cities. Yet, in small rural towns throughout the midwest, there is little evidence of extensive historic preservation efforts. There continues to be a substantial lack of clarity and direction in small town rural preservation. In order to achieve comprehensive and sustainable preservation in our rural communities, it is imperative that we understand and explore the meaning of historic preservation for these uniquely situated small towns. Through this inquiry and dialogue, it is hoped that the actual preservation process will be more fully understood, and that preservation in small towns should be appreciated as an important part of their social, economic, and political structure.

This paper explores the issues and questions concerning small town rural preservation in two parts: 1) to develop, identify, and clarify a working philosophy for historic preservation in rural small towns in the midwest, and 2) to investigate the preservation efforts in the small towns of Council Grove, Kansas, and Weston, Missouri, in order to grasp some understanding of "how" and "why" these two communities have achieved success in their respective preservation activities.

The studies of Council Grove and Weston have demonstrated that preservation is an important and practical part of these small midwestern towns. These two towns have a rich history, but to their citizens, preservation has also a very practical component.

Historic buildings are used. These structures are clearly cherished as part of their culture and history, but they also serve as inspiration, and as invaluable resources for the present and future. Research for this paper demonstrates that preservation in small rural communities can be successful and important when the town, itself, is an active working community which recognizes its own unique historic resources for nourishment of the spirit as well as concern for practical, economic use and function.